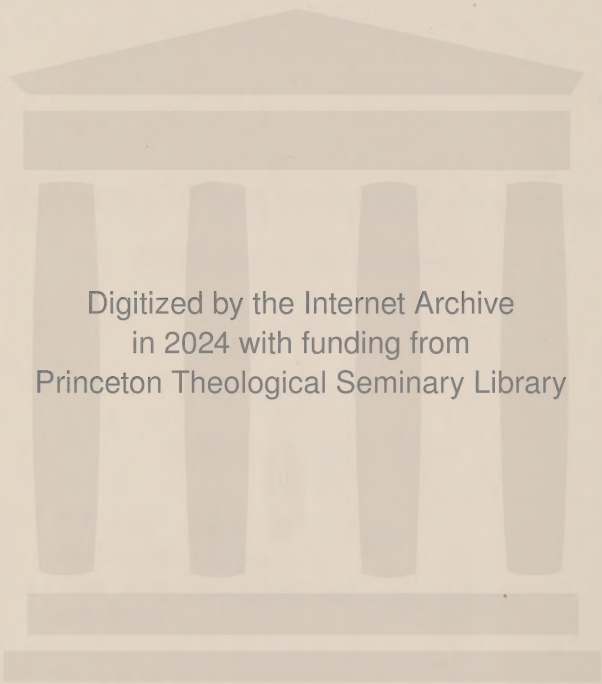
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THE

INCARNATION

OF

THE SON OF GOD

Illustrated.

IN THREE PARTS:

I. THE NECESSITY OF IT ESTABLISHED.
II. THE REALITY OF IT PROVED.
III. THE BLESSINGS OF IT EXHIBITED.

BY JOHN MELDRUM.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. JOHN.

I would by publishing the design of the Saviour's incarnation, engage you to concur in it. By celebrating the glory of the King Messiah, I long to see it displayed among you, in all its splendid magnificence. SAURIN.

VOL. II.

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1807.

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THE

INCARNATION

OF THE

SON OF GOD, &c.

DISCOURSE IX.

THE THIRD PASSOVER.

WE are now arrived at the third year of our Saviour's public ministry, throughout which shall meet with many glorious illustrations of his divinity. The proofs of his eternal power and godhead are so numerous, that we cannot comprise them in a small compass; and his glory is so resplendent, that it cannot be set forth in a few words. The growing evidence of the Son of God in human nature rises beyond all reasonable contradiction. The Sun of Righteousness shines stronger and brighter, and communicates his saving efficacy with more absolute authority, if possible. New signs and wonders of a different nature there is no reason to expect; such as a new crea-

tion of any kind, or form of living creatures; converting the sea of Galilee into wine, or spirituous liquors; removing the mountains round about Jerusalem, and placing the holy city in a plain; or other such extravagant things. Such like prodigies would have gratified the carnal appetites of the heads of the synagogue, who were so urgent for signs of this nature; but had they been exhibited, they would have had no tendency either to destroy the works of the devil, or to convert the souls of men to God. Hence he always made the present circumstances, the necessities, wants, and miseries of his creatures, the rule of his doctrine and miracles: and did nothing to gratify vain and idle curiosity; but every thing that was profitable to the temporal, and eternal interests of his followers. By such kind of manifestations of his divine powers, which most certainly were equally within his reach, he would have shown himself to to be a mighty Potentate; could easily have driven back the ægean sea, and made way for his followers to pass to the metropolis of the world; or he could have made the waters of the Mediterranean solid under their feet, if he chose, at their head, to demand the imperial crown. But such projects would have been contrary to the intent of his incarnation: they were no way suitable to those immortal beings he came to save. Therefore every thing of the kind is neglected, and no expectations ever excited to hope for them.

They are beneath the dignity of a divine person, whose advent is rather to bless the souls than the bodies of men, and to fit them for an inheritance that fadeth not away. His works therefore are all of a spiritual immortal nature, similar to the instructions which he inculcated, and highly illustrative of them.

But to return to our history. It does not fully appear that our blessed Lord attended this passover; though it is supposed, by many eminent divines, that he did in a private way. But the light of the world could not be hid, and must have been recognised in the holy city, if he had been there; the silence of all the evangelists concerning it is, I should think, sufficient authority to say he was not; and good reason may be assigned why he absented himself at this solemnity. The rulers of the people watched for an opportunity to cut him off, which he avoided till the time was fully come. There was one year of the week, foretold by Daniel, yet to run: the evil spirits among the people were not sufficiently subdued; many were yet to be ejected, and some further discoveries to be made of his divine glory which had not yet taken place: to which may be added, that the infernal powers had not yet got possession of all the instruments of cruelty which were necessary, in order to apprehend and condemn him. At another annual assembly all things might be prepared on both sides, and the time

would be fully come when the Son of God should be delivered into the hands of wicked men. All this we shall find to be really the case.

At this time therefore, instead of travelling south to the solemn assembly at the holy city, he turned his back upon it, and went northward to Tyre and Sidon, giving an intimation that the Gentiles should, in due time, enjoy the blessings of his incarnation as well as the Jews; that passovers were near a close; and the true sacrifice for sin was about to be opened to all the world.

Having retired into the province of Phœnicia, where these two ancient and maritime cities stood; he entered into an house, where he wished to be unknown for some time. Here, however, he was soon discovered: a poor woman hearing that he was so near, and having a full assurance of his being able to recover her daughter, who was grievously tormented with a demon, came to him, and entreated him to have mercy on her and her daughter: she acknowledged him to be the Messiah, and the Son of David; and that his powerful mercy was all-sufficient to relieve her: he seemed to take no notice, either of her confession, or her request; on which she made application to his disciples, and was urgent with them to intercede for her: they represented her importunity, and desired him to grant her petition, and send her away. But he told them, that his personal work was only in the house of Israel; and that

alone was entitled to the benefit of his offices. The distressed woman hearing this was the more importunate: her faith was great, and not easy to be overcome: she saw the Saviour before her, and that salvation was within her reach; the opportunity now neglected might never return; her daughter, in that case, must be a wretched creature through life; and herself a most unhappy mother, in seeing the grievous torments of her child. The necessity of the case urging her importunity, she approached, and fell down at his feet, and in the most humble manner, worshipped him, saying, LORD HELP ME.

He gave her still a discouraging answer, and said, it was very improper to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs; meaning, that it was not fit to exercise his divine power in casting out evil spirits any where but among the professed people of God, to whom he was personally commissioned. She humbly acknowledged the truth of this, but added, that as dogs might eat the crumbs which the children let fall and neglected, so the mercy of God might be extended to her, an out-cast from the house of Israel.

After such trials of this poor woman's faith and fortitude, the Lord highly commended her in these expressive words:—O woman, great is thy faith; and then added a promise to the utmost of her wishes;—be it unto thee, even as thou wilt: and in that very hour her daughter was made whole.

Our blessed Lord soon left this retirement, and returned to the usual places of his public ministry; where he wrought many cures, to the astonishment of great multitudes.

The concourse of people being very great, and many of them having come from a considerable distance, he again manifested his compassion by refreshing them in a miraculous way, as he had on a former occasion. They had attended his ministry for three days without intermission, and he was unwilling to dismiss them till he had supplied their wants, that they might be strengthened for their journey home. He therefore called his disciples, and told them what he intended; they having forgot the former miraculous repast, asked how they could procure provision in the wilderness to supply such a great multitude? But without taking notice of their want of recollection and little faith, he ordered them to see how many loaves they had; they answered, there were but seven, and a few little fishes; on which he commanded the people to sit down on the ground. Which done, he took the loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

The number of the people was four thousand men, besides women and children, which did all eat, and were well satisfied; and the remainder was considerably more than the stock with which they began; for they took up the fragments that

remained seven baskets full. Seven loaves and the few little fishes, which one basket might have contained, were increased, by the divine power and goodness of the Son of God, each to fill a separate basket. What wonders of mercy are here displayed to the bodies as well as to the souls of men! He now dismissed the people, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Having taken ship with his disciples; he landed at Dalmanutha, a particular part in this country. It lay on the south-east of the sea of Galilee. When the Scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem heard he was come so much nearer than he had lately been, they went thither, to watch his motions, and examine his doctrines and pretensions: they wanted some other kind of signs, than those which they had either seen or heard of. They wanted signs from heaven, of a carnal earthly nature, as if there had been nothing of heaven, in the numerous signs already exhibited. But if, at the command of their Creator, the sun had left his place in the heavens, and fixed his seat on Mount Moriah for a time; and the moon her orbit, to descend and sit on Mount Tabor; and all the planets their different stations, to occupy the most lofty summits in the holy land: if, I say, the blessed Jesus had ordered such signs as these from heaven, to gratify these self-righteous malicious people; still they would have been dissatisfied; and would rather have seen an earthly monarch,

full of state and pageantry, such as they wished for, than the Lord of life and glory, in all the sweetness of love and humility. He was, therefore, grieved in his heart, in observing their inveterate infidelity; and told these enquirers, as he had told them before, that no other sign should be given them, but what he had mentioned, which was that of the prophet Jonas; which had a manifest respect to his death and resurrection, but which they did not comprehend.

He soon left this place and went over to the other side of the lake; as soon as they had left the land, he said to his disciples, beware of the leaven, meaning the principles of those they had left, which were of a destructive nature. Such were those of the Pharisees, who propagated the sufficiency of human obedience, to satisfy all demands of divine justice: the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. These doctrines were to be guarded against, because they were of the most pernicious tendency. The disciples did not at first understand the meaning of the advice, and thought it was a reproof for their neglect of laying in a sufficiency of bread. But he soon convinced them of their mistake, by referring them to the miracles he had lately wrought before them, in feeding so many thousands with such small provision; and reproved them, both for their want of attention and the smallness of their faith.

At Bethsaida he opened the eyes of a blind man, by anointing them with his spittle: and in Decapolis one who was deaf, and almost dumb, by the same means, applied to his ears and tongue.

In order to prepare his disciples for the great end of his incarnation, he took an examination of their faith, and inquired what they really believed him to be. He introduced this, by asking of them the opinion of others concerning him. They answered, the general opinion was, that he was not the Messias, but either John Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or some other great prophet risen from the dead; who should introduce him into the world. But he put the question fully to them, and said, But whom say ye that I am? Peter, for himself and brethren, made answer, that they believed him to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God; that they believed this as certainly as all others, who saw and heard him, believed him to be the son of man. In this confession Jesus pronounced him blessed; assuring him, that it was a revelation which none but his Father could make, for none knows the Son save the Father. He further added, that the divine nature, which he acknowledged to be in him, was that rock on which he should build his church; against which the powers of hell, though they might make many attempts, should not prevail; assuring Peter that he should have power and authority to act in his name, in those regulations which were necessary in it. Then he charged

them all, not to make known his true character at present, any further than they had formerly done.

Having acknowledged himself to be the Son of the living God, according to the noble confession they had made of him, he now began to speak more familiarly, and frequently to them, of his deep humiliation and extreme sufferings at the next passover: that the chief priests and Scribes should put him to death; but that he should rise again on the third day.

When Peter heard this moving story, he openly opposed it, and began to reprove his Lord for entertaining such notions, and to offer him such advice as he thought best to prevent such consequences; intreating him to have pity on himself, and to take care of his invaluable life. But the Lord turned short upon him, and said, Peter, you speak under the influence of a bad spirit; Satan himself dictates what you say, knowing the intent of my incarnation, he wishes to prevent it; he speaks through you that which is highly dishonourable to God, in such pretended zeal for the good of men: guard, therefore, for the future against such suggestions.

After this, he laid before his disciples, and the multitudes that followed him, the difficulties they must go through who would be his faithful servants; pressed upon them the necessity of seeking the blessedness of an eternal state, in preference to a temporal; the worth and immortality of the soul; the glory of his last coming to judgment,

when he shall reward every man according to his works; and, finally, that his kingdom should be set up in the world, before many who now heard him died.

We are now going to ascend to Mount Tabor, to contemplate the transfiguration of the Son of Man. Here he displayed his personal glory in a way he had not before done. He had manifested this very often in his discourses and miracles, but now he designed to show himself more fully to those disciples, who were hereafter to be the leading ministers in his church. He therefore took Peter, James, and John, with him that they might be witnesses of it; and declare it after his resurrection to all the world. Having ascended the mountain, which was high, above four miles in height, says Echard, situated in the plain of Galilee, they engaged in the solemn duty of prayer. While he was earnestly employed in this exercise, he was suddenly transformed into another kind of appearance; a radiant lustre shone from his face more glorious than the sun, and a dazzling splendor proceeded from his garments, exceeding that of the whitest snow; it was more resplendent than the purest light; so that the utmost power of art, could not imitate it. The glory of the divine and eternal Shechinah shone through the vail of his blessed humanity.

While Jesus was in this glorious scene, Moses and Elias appeared with him in their heavenly

glory, and entered into discourse with him on his approaching sufferings and death, which he was soon to accomplish at Jerusalem. While the Lord of glory and his two ancient and eminent servants continued their conversation, the disciples were overpowered by the weight of the vision, as Daniel and other prophets had been on former occasions, and fell asleep; to which, perhaps, the fatigues of the day might prepare them, if all this happened, as is not improbable, in the night.

It would add no strength to the proof we are now illustrating, to exhibit, if it were possible, either the extent, or order, of the conversation of these heavenly visitants, with their incarnate Lord and Saviour; nor to say what time it lasted. But as the subject was the sufferings and death of Emmanuel; we may suppose, Moses the redeemer of Israel from Egypt; the law-giver from mount Sinai; the mediator for the murmuring, provoking tribes; and the prophet who foretold his incarnation, would speak of the necessity of his not only exercising all these offices in which he prefigured him, for the benefit of all mankind, but particularly, that it behoved him to suffer to the shedding of his most precious blood, for the justifying of the guilty of all nations, people, and languages, which the constant sacrifices of his legal dispensation for so many ages had typified.

Elias might enter into the transactions of his own life, and speak of that reformation, which he effect-

ed by his orders, among the ten tribes of revolted Israel, when he opposed and overthrew all those heathenish priests who were their promoters. But that the decease of his blessed Lord should be productive of an infinitely greater, and more extensive reformation in all the nations of the earth, when he should ovethrow the idolatry of the Gentiles, and destroy the works of the devil in the world. This should be followed with showers of blessings, on the souls and circumstances of men. The matter and manner of these sufferings might be entered into at great length, and the whole passion of the Son of God might now be turned over; and mutual congratulations on the certain victory and consequent eternal glory might conclude the whole.

When the disciples awoke from their sleep, they found these glorified men still in conversation with their Lord. They heard what the subject was, but could not enter into the merits of it. Peter seeing so much glory, and hearing a part of such heavenly discourse, cried out as in an extacy, and said "Lord! it is good for us to be here. Let us stay and build three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and a third for Elias." These heavenly strangers had just withdrawn; and Peter spoke, as if he expected their continuance, which in the nature of things could not be.

As soon as they were gone, and Peter had scarcely finished his improper motion; a bright supernatural cloud overshadowed their Master and

them, and they feared greatly, as the cloud covered them: in this cloud, they heard a voice, saying, "*This is my beloved Son*; HEAR HIM." This is the second testimony of the Father, concerning his only begotten. In the first, he declares his pleasure and satisfaction in him, and his engagements, In the second, he commands attention and obedience to be paid him for ever.

It would seem that the transfiguration took place in the night; not only from the circumstance of the disciples being overcome with sleep, but also from Luke's saying, they came down from the hill the next day; intimating they went up the day before. However, as they came down, the Lord ordered them not to inform the rest of the disciples of any thing they had either seen or heard till after his resurrection, which would gain full credit to their relation of it; and as it would prevent evil surmisings for the distinguishing honour he had conferred upon them. They punctually obeyed this order, but could not help wondering between themselves what he could mean by his rising again from the dead.

Having joined the disciples, whom he had left at the bottom of the hill; he found them warmly engaged with the Scribes and Pharisees, on which he inquired about what they were debating. One of the company came to him and said, "Master, I have brought my son, who is a lunatic, and most grievously afflicted with an evil spirit, which tears

and bruises him in a most cruel manner, and often almost kills him before it leaves him. Being disappointed in my expectation of meeting with yourself, I besought thy disciples to cast him out, but they have not been able. Now, I beseech thee, look upon my child, for he is my only son, and relieve him." Jesus finding that his enemies were exulting over him, because his disciples were not able to eject this evil spirit; said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer such insults from your infidelity? bring the child here to me." They brought him; and in the way as he was coming, the devil threw him down, and tore him cruelly: but Jesus rebuked him, healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. Thus he vindicated his followers, confounded his enemies, manifested his divine power and goodness, to the astonishment of all the spectators, and gave another proof of his being really the incarnate Son of God.

While the astonished multitudes were lost in wonder at this, and all the other manifestations of his divinity, he said to his disciples, perhaps in the hearing of many, attend particularly to what you have seen and heard, and let my words sink into your minds, for the Son of man shall soon be delivered into the hands of men. They who heard did not understand this, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

Pursuing the course of his ministry, he went

through many parts of Galilee, but wished to be more private than he had formerly been. He now informed his disciples more fully than on any former occasion that he should be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, that they should put him to a shameful and cruel death, but that he should rise again on the third day. This filled them with exceeding great grief, as it blasted all their high expectations of his being that mighty potentate, who should govern all nations, as they hoped he would soon make appear; and as to rising again from the dead, they could hardly think of any such thing, and therefore it had no effect upon them.

Being about this time at Capernaum, the Lord gave a proof of his omniscience to Peter, by ordering him to go to the sea, and cast a hook into the water, and take the first fish he should catch, and open its mouth, in which he should find a piece of silver, which would be sufficient for the present demand. The collectors of the annual tax for the temple had demanded this of Peter, for his master and himself: it had always been paid according to the law by every male from twenty years old and upward. The God of the temple, now in human nature, himself submits to the tribute, and pays the half shekel, to the value of one shilling and threepence of our money. He manifests his infinite knowledge to Peter, and gives him convincing evidence of his being present when the demand

was made, and directs him where to find the supply which his omnipotence should provide: he went and took the fish, and found the money, as his Lord had said, in his mouth, and paid it cheerfully to the service of the sanctuary for his Lord and himself. Here see an authorative example from the Head of the church for the maintenance of the public services of his worship.

He now taught his followers more fully than on any former occasion the necessity and the exercise of humility. Some of them gave him a good opportunity of inculcating this doctrine. They had been debating among themselves which should be the greatest in his kingdom, which they expected he would very soon assume:—they applied to him to settle this dispute; on which he called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "The pride and vanity of your hearts is too manifest in this question. I tell you therefore, that he who shall humble himself, and manifest a docile, affectionate, and lowly disposition, such as you know to be in this little child, who has no such ambitious pursuits, as you now express, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven: and whosoever shall receive such a character in my name, in effect receiveth me; and such as despise and reject them will have an awful account to give, both for their vanity, and the cruel consequences of it.

He told them of the unavoidable offences that

would arise from the world, on the account of this salutary doctrine; but exhorted them to bear all the sufferings they should be exposed to, even to the losing the dearest things in nature with patience and fortitude; as this should be the means of preserving them from the deserved vengeance of God, which shall be poured, without mixture, on the ambitious.

He next laid down a body of rules for their direction, and the promotion of this heavenly angelic virtue, which I need not here particularly repeat.

Our blessed Lord spent some months in Galilee, and principally at Capernaum. The great feast of tabernacles was now approaching, but he did not give any intimations of his attending it. This might give occasion to some of his relations, who did not yet believe him to be the Son of God, and whose hopes were of a carnal nature, to urge him to go to the holy city, on this public festival, and show himself there in his true character, if he was really the Messiah; saying, that such a manifestation of himself would be much to his honour, and would both confirm, and increase the number of his disciples. He told them that he should not undertake such a journey at present, nor for such purposes as they hinted; but they might go as soon as they pleased, and not tarry for him, since they had not such reasons for caution as he had: that the faithful discharge of his duty, had armed his malicious enemies with envy and rage against

him, to which it was not yet his time to submit; therefore, he wished them to go, and leave him behind. They accordingly left him in Galilee, and went to Jerusalem.

Some days after these unbelieving relations were gone, he went up also, but in as secret a manner as possible. In the way, he had occasion to reprove the intemperate zeal of James and John: having sent to a certain village to provide lodging for the night, the inhabitants would not accommodate them, because they were going to Jerusalem, to this solemnity which the Samaritans hated. The temple and worship at the holy city were opposed by the temple and services on mount Gerizim, to which the woman of Samaria alluded in her conversation with Jesus at Jacob's well; when she said, our Fathers worshipped on this mountain: upon the account of the opposition of these temples, the Jews had no dealing with the Samaritans; and the Samaritans hated the Jews*. Hence these

* The occasion of the prejudice, which grew to a national hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, arose from the two places at which they worshipped; that at Jerusalem was appointed by divine authority; but the Samaritan temple had no such claim. History gives us the following account of its erection; Sanballat, the great enemy of the Jews, and particular adversary of Nehemiah, had obtained a grant of the king of Persia, to build a temple on mount Gerizim in Samaria, similar to that at Jerusalem. Manassah, the son of the high-priest at Jerusalem, had married a daughter of Sanballat, whom he would not put away when Nehemiah ordered all the Jews to separate themselves

villagers refused our Lord and his followers, a night's accommodation, which so much incensed these brethren that they requested permission to command fire from heaven, in imitation of Elias, to consume them. But the Saviour of souls gave them a serious reproof for indulging the spirit of revenge; saying, ye know not the evil spirit by which ye are moved: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to spend the night in another village.

In this journey several came and offered him their services as his disciples; but he declined their offers seeing them arise from improper motives.

Before our blessed Lord came to Jerusalem, he selected seventy of his disciples, and sent them into different parts of the country to preach the Gospel, and to eject evil spirits among the people. He appointed them to go two and two together, telling them, that when they had finished their excursion, he should follow them in the same places. He gave them the same authority and directions,

from the heathenish wives which they had married. This son of the high-priest, and son-in-law to Sanballat, the Horonite, opposed this measure of the Tirshatha. Therefore he says, I chased him from me. He fled with his wife and adherents to Samaria; and was consecrated the first high-priest of this new temple. Hence arose the inveterate animosity between the Jews and Samaritans, which began about four hundred years before Christ, and in his time was carried to the highest pitch of resentment. Vide Prideaux Connect. part 1, lib. 6.

which he had given the twelve, about sixteen months before, when he sent them out in the same manner. Hereby he lessened the number of his followers into the city, which made his entry the less remarkable, and might prevent the spirit of malice and envy among the rulers of the people, and more effectually promoted the manifestation of his glory, in fulfilling the blessed design of his advent.

As he had chosen twelve before according to the number of the Patriarchs and tribes of Israel; so he now chose seventy according to the number of their elders and senators. The apostles' commission was, to go to any of the cities of Israel; but these were only to go to such places as he designed to visit, after his return from the feast, to prepare the way for a more full revelation of himself.

This feast began about the beginning of our October, and according to divine appointment was to last seven days complete, and to conclude on the eighth. The first four or five days of the solemnity, Jesus became the general talk of the city: his friends fervently wishing he might be there, and his enemies equally dreading it. So that there was much contention among the people concerning him. But about the middle of the week, he made his appearance, and began to preach in the temple. He vindicated the doctrine he preached, and the miraculous works he had done against the Scribes and Pharisees; and particularly reproved the self-

righteous and cruel spirit, which, under the mask of piety, sought to take away his innocent and holy life, for doing an act of mercy on the Sabbath-day; it was something better than eighteen months, since he cured the lame man at the pool by the sheep market, and had ordered him to carry his bed on the Sabbath-day, which had been the cause of much combination against him, and procured many threatenings of his life.

When the chief priests heard that he was in the city, they sent to apprehend him. But he told their officers, before all the people, that it was but a very little time they should be troubled with his company; that they should find their error in thus persecuting him; and should seek him but not find him, when they, in their severest distress, should be convinced of his real dignity and worth. The people were very much divided in their opinions concerning him; some believing that he was certainly the promised Messiah; others hesitating, from their ignorance of his birth and pedigree; and others positively denying his divine authority, and asserting that he could be nothing but a deceiver. But on the eighth, and last, and greatest day of the feast, when they had performed the ceremony of pouring out water, in commemoration of the water from the rock, which followed their fathers in the wilderness, Jesus stood up in the temple, and said, with a voice more audible than usual, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that

believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. By this living water, he meant, the Holy Spirit which should be given after his resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The officers sent to take him, were so over-awed with the majesty and power of his discourse, that they returned without apprehending him; which caused such a ferment in the Sanhedrim, that they broke up their sitting without any further resolutions concerning him.

He continued some short time after the feast in Jerusalem and its vicinity, attending and instructing the people in the temple during the times of public worship, and retiring to Bethany, about two miles off, in the evening. His usual place of preaching was in the court of the women at the treasury. Here the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to him taken in adultery, with an intent to cavil with him, and condemn him, if he either condemned or vindicated her; but by his infinite prudence, he first forced every accuser to condemn himself, and exhorted the woman to sin no more.

During the remainder of his stay, he spake more fully of himself, than he had formerly done to the populace; illustrating to them, that his commission was from God, that he was the author of spiritual life, and divine light in the world; that it was in vain they claimed any relationship to the God of Abraham, or even to this father of the faithful, while

they were slaves to the devil, and every hellish passion; that he alone was the person whom Abraham worshipped; that he rejoiced at the distant prospect of his future incarnation; and was glad to see, by the spirit of prophecy, the time, and the happy consequences of his manifestation in the human nature: in short he told them plainly, that he was a divine person before Abraham was born; and consequently was before him in his eternal existence, and above him in matters of authority.

This plain discourse so enraged the proud heads of the synagogue who heard it, that they reviled him as a Samaritan, a name sufficiently odious to every Jew; and they would not know that he was any thing else but a Samaritan, in whom the devil dwelt: and to be sure that must be the worst of devils, which possessed the worst of men; it must be, if possible, a devil worse than Beelzebub the prince, who durst blasphemously assume to itself, the prerogatives and perfections of God, supreme worship and universal dominion. Such pretensions as these, in what seemed to them to be but a mere creature, were utterly intolerable. They therefore took up stones, to stone him to death as a most notorious blasphemer. But the faithful and true witness withdrew himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them unconcerned and without fear.

DISCOURSE X.

THE THIRD PASSOVER.

THE blessed Jesus having delivered himself out of the hands of his malicious persecutors, did not decline the manifestation of his divine mercy and compassion; nor was he discouraged from exercising his infinite power, where needy objects fell in his way. Being in the city the Sabbath following, he saw a poor man who was born blind; to whom he restored his sight, by means more likely to blind than enlighten him: he made clay with his spittle on the ground, and laid it on the man's eyes, and ordered him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash his eyes with the water of it. He obeyed the order, and went and washed, and received his sight. How manifest is the divine agency here! The means appointed, however contrary to human reason, and seemingly improper for the end, shall, in the hand of the Omnipotent, answer the purpose he intends them for: such as obey his commands shall not lose their reward.

This striking miracle reached the ears of the Pharisees, who examined the man on the truth and reality of it. He told them fully how it was effected; but they would not believe that he had been blind, and therefore sent for his parents, to

know of them whether it had been so or not. They confirmed what he said of himself, but how he had received his sight they could not tell. They then more strictly interrogated him as to the time, manner, and circumstances of the cure. He answered them, I told you before, but ye did not believe me; I can say nothing more than that Jesus has restored my sight: and it is astonishing that ye cannot see the hand of God in it. On this they excommunicated him, as a disciple of Jesus.

Our Lord, soon after, meeting with the man, asked him if he believed on the Son of God. He said, Who is he Lord, that I might believe on him. Jesus told him he was the person. On which he confessed his faith, and worshipped him. While he made a practical improvement of this act of mercy to this poor object, in the presence of some of the Pharisees, they found that he reflected on them; and asked whether he thought they were blind also. To whom he said they were mentally and wilfully blind; and, consequently, inexcusable sinners.

He now opened some of the prophecies which had a respect to his office characters; particularly that of a shepherd: in which David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zachariah had made mention of him. He points out the difference between him and all pretenders: and proves that he, by eminence, is the good Shepherd; maintains his unity, and equality with the Father; but that he acted by a

particular commission from him: that he should soon lay down his life for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, whom his Father had given unto him; and that, in consequence, they should be infallibly and eternally safe, on being received into his fold.

About this time the seventy disciples returned from their various excursions, rejoicing, that even the devils were subject unto them, through the power and authority of their Lord. He told them, that he saw the effect of their ministry, and beheld satan's influence flying before them as lightning from heaven. He confirmed them in the powers he had given them; and assured them, they should not by any means be injured by all the power of their enemies. But, said he, this is not so great a cause of joy to you, as that your names are enrolled in heaven for eternal life. At the same time he rejoiced in his own mind, and as man, gave thanks to the Father for the distinguishing success which he had granted him; declaring that he had received supreme dominion and authority from the Father, who only knew him, as he only knew the Father, and was alone able to reveal him to whomsoever he pleased. He then told his disciples, that they were greatly blessed above many prophets, and kings, who desired to see and hear the things they had, but never enjoyed that privilege.

A certain lawyer asked him by way of banter, and insult, what he should do to inherit eternal life. The Saviour of men referred him to the law for a

view of sin; which, if he could keep perfectly, would justify him. But to convince him, that he had neither the spirit, nor the principles of the law of God in him, he laid before him the parable of the good Samaritan; whose mercy and compassion to the ruined afflicted man, was more consonant to the nature of the law, and the revealed will of God than all the acquired wisdom, and sanctimonious attainments of the priest and Levite, which brought forth no honour to God nor benefit to man.

Coming to Bethany, he was entertained at the house of his beloved friends, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary: here every degree of respect was shown him, but particularly by Mary who sat down at his feet to hear his discourse. This he commended as a greater honour than Martha's care about the provisions of her table, about which she showed too much anxiety.

Being solemnly engaged in prayer, in a certain place, one of his disciples in the name of the rest, desired he would teach them to pray, as John had taught his disciples; on which he gave them the same form of words, which had before been prescribed to the apostles; only leaving out the doxology: adding some strong arguments to enforce the frequency, and fervency of the duty.

About this time he cast out a devil, which took away the use of speech from the poor object of which it had taken possession; on which, the man spake to the wonder of all the spectators. But

many of the rude populace had learned to oppose the divine power, in the stile of the Scribes and Pharisees, and ascribed this, and other miracles of the same nature, to the chief of the devils. The meek and merciful Son of God condescended to reason the case with them, and showed the absurdity of their imaginations, together with the impossibility of the thing; and how dangerous it was, to imbibe such blasphemous notions, as they would continually increase to the eternal ruin of those who indulged them.

He then assured them, that such an evil generation which was continually seeking after signs of a carnal nature, should have no other than what he had formerly mentioned; which was, that of Jonas the prophet; that the infidelity of it should be highly condemned at the last judgment, by the ignorant heathens, who may well be astonished at the opposition made, to the manifestations of the goodness and mercy of God, so evidently displayed.

After many discourses, exhorting those who heard the divine truth to adhere to it; he denounces the vengeance of heaven against the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, who were deceivers of the people, and blasphemers of God; assuring them, that all the blood which had been shed from the beginning of the world, to the last, whom they should barbarously murder, would be required of them.

As the great Redeemer of men went forward in the

manifestation of his divine glory, he made use of the synagogues wherever he came; reproving the covetousness, pride and hypocrisy, which he saw every where so prevalent; exposing the iniquity, and folly of an anxious, distrustful care after the perishing enjoyments of this life, while the sublime and spiritual entertainments of the world to come were neglected. He illustrated all this by the parable of a rich man, whose fields produced the most plentiful crops, upon which he had set his heart, but was summoned into eternity before he could taste them; on which he makes a most appropriate improvement and application. He enforces the doctrine of repentance, and points out the miserable state of the impenitent.

In one of the synagogues, he healed a woman, who had been in a state of great infirmity, for eighteen years; this miraculous work was done on the Sabbath-day, which gave much offence; but he defended what he had done, and made his adversaries ashamed of their opposition; which was cause of much joy to the people.

Soon after, he performed another miracle on the Sabbath-day; which was, curing a man who had the dropsy. This was done with such manifest evidence of divine benignity, that the lawyers and Pharisees who were present could find nothing to object. He openly exposed the weakness of their excuses against his pure doctrine and ministry; inculcated the principles of humility on these proud

spirits; assuring them, that if they did not embrace him in preference to every earthly relation and enjoyment, they could not be his true discipies; advising them, seriously to examine this matter, and whether they were able by their human merits to satisfy all the demands of a just God, and fulfil the many thousands of requisitions, which his righteous and holy law required. It therefore became the indispensable duty of every needy creature to apply to him the only Saviour with a serious sound faith: lest they should be hereafter rejected, and cast out by him as salt that had lost its savour, and which is good for nothing but the dunghill. He then finished for the present, with these impressive words: "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

To carry home the truths which he had been inculcating with greater force to the conscience; he illustrated them by five very applicable parables. The first of the lost sheep, for the sake of which the owner left all his flock, and went in search of it till he found it; and brought it home rejoicing. The second, of the lost piece of silver, which was sought for with the utmost care, till it was found again. The third, of the prodigal son, who voluntarily went from his father and ruined himself; having no means of subsistence, he returned home with the deepest contrition, on the bare presumption of his justly offended Father's compassion, and was most affectionately received. These three parables have so much of the design of the incarnation of the Son

of God in them, that it must be obvious to every discerning eye. For he came to seek and save lost souls, and to exhibit the eternal love and compassion of God to the repenting and penitent.

The fourth parable, is that of the unjust steward, which illustrates the mistaken notions, the carnal views, sinful shifts, and unrighteous proceedings of worldly-minded men: who are provident for time, but regardless of eternity; which he very properly exposes and reproves.

The fifth parable, is that of a rich man contrasted with a certain beggar, named Lazarus. Here, the divine teacher brings his audience to the verge of the invisible world: he ascertains the existence of the souls of men in a separate state; that the good are in bliss, the bad in burning woe; that each know the circumstances and situation of the other, though there is no possible communication between them; and that when the soul leaves the body at death, the means of salvation, and the day of mercy are closed for ever. Hence this parable concludes with a strong recommendation of these means, as they are established in the sacred Scriptures.

He made use of other parables, which it is not to our purpose immediately to enumerate; we therefore refer to the evangelists, who exhibit his infinite wisdom in his discourses, with equal fidelity as his power and mercy in his miracles; but these last being more the objects of sense than contemplation, we fix our attention more particularly upon them,

as producing the most evident proof of the subject; and give us visible demonstration, that God is manifest in the flesh.

The next display of his divine power was, in the cure of ten lepers, whom he met with in one of the villages of Samaria. They besought him fervently to have mercy on them; he ordered them to go and show themselves to the priests, as the law of Moses commanded. They obeyed, and were cleansed on their way. This is the second miracle of the kind upon record.

After spending about two months in the country, and doubtless in many of those places where some of the seventy disciples had been; he came again to Jerusalem, to honour the feast of the dedication with his presence. It was in winter, in the beginning of December. The Jews now attacked him more violently than before, and seemed resolved to know, whether he was the real Messiah or not. He answered them much in the same manner as he had done before; on which they again took up stones to stone him. He soon left them, and went beyond Jordan, where there were many true believers.

Whilst the Lord of life was employed in these parts, Lazarus of Bethany was taken ill and died. During his illness, Martha and Mary, his sisters, sent a special messenger to inform him, and desire he would come and recover him. Designing to make a more full display of his deity than he ever had yet done, and so near the time and scene of all

his sorrows, which in a few months should commence at Jerusalem, he took little notice of the invitation, but intimated to his disciples, that this providential circumstance befalling one of their best friends, was ordered for the further manifestation of the glory of the Son of God. And he abode two days still in the same place.

The faith and affections of this pious family might be greatly shaken at this time with regard to the Lord's professed attachment; many surmises might arise that he neglected them; that they were too much beneath his notice, and that he regarded them not. But to remove every uneasy suspicion, to prove the reality of his regard, and to manifest in the fullest manner, the glory of his divine person and godhead, he came to Bethany. John xi. 1, 20.

As soon as he arrived at the village, the two sisters went out to meet him, and lamented his absence, saying, if he had been present he would have prevented their brother's death. Jesus told them not to be discouraged, he should rise again. They did not understand this of an immediate resurrection, but of that which should take place in general at the last day. But he assured them, he spake personally of Lazarus, and that they should now see the glory of God manifest in him. He then enquired where they had buried him; they went to the place, and on the way, a deep sorrow so afflicted the whole company, that Jesus, the true,

the compassionate, the tender-hearted man, wept in sympathy with them that wept.

He had been interred four days, and if he died three days before the interment, he must have been dead a week or more. However the deeply affected Son of God ordered the stone to be removed from the cave, or sepulchre, in which the body was laid. Martha said it would be to no purpose, and beside it must now be putrified, and very offensive; but Jesus checked her unbelief, and told them to open the grave; which done, he made a short address to his Father, and then with a very audible voice that all might hear, he said, Lazarus come forth. The dead body revived, and rose with all the bandages with which it was entangled. But Jesus ordered them to loose him and let him have his liberty. John xi. 20. 45.

We may be allowed to say of this, that it was the most splendid display, which the Son of God had hitherto made of his divinity. It took place too, but a few months before another more stupendous should be exhibited in his own resurrection, and not above two miles distant: here in the suburbs of the holy city, the holy God manifests himself more than ever he did within the sacred walls. Why? To show his enemies who had the supreme command there, that he was truly the resurrection and the life. That in vain should they attempt any thing against him, if he chose to restrain them; that he could as certainly deprive them of life, as restore

it in the present instance ; that the city was too profane, too much under the management of hell, too deep a sink of impurity, to admit of so much divine glory ; that their guilt should appear more evident in all the steps they should take in opposition to him, particularly in persecuting him to death; and finally, that the divine glory was about to depart from their city; their temple should be destroyed, as certainly, as they should take away his life ; and destroy the sacred temple of his body, which should also rise again according to the Scriptures.

This wonderful manifestation of the divine power, instead of operating to the conversion of the high priests and rulers of the people had a contrary effect. They held a consultation on the occasion, in which Caiaphas showed the necessity of sacrificing him for the preservation of the whole nation ; because said he, if we suffer him to go on, the public safety will be endangered, and a revolution will be the certain consequence, to prevent which he ought to be taken into custody. On this, they gave out orders to apprehend him, wherever he could be found.

Soon after Jesus left Judea and went into a small city of Samaria, called Ephraim, where he spent some weeks privately with his disciples. In this retirement, Salome, the mother of James and John, petitioned him for the highest places in his kingdom for her sons; grounding her petition perhaps on the near affinity they stood in to him, being his first

cousins; and the nearest relations he had, as well as his true and faithful disciples: but her application could not be granted; and it gave much offence to all their brethren.

We shall now attend our blessed Lord in his last journey to Jerusalem, when he should, as the Lamb of God, suffer for the transgressions of men. The place of his retirement, it should seem, was not far from Jericho: accordingly, he took it in his way. As he came near the town, he opened the eyes of a poor blind man, who sat begging. A great concourse of people came out to meet him; some, no doubt, to gratify their curiosity with the sight of such an extraordinary character; and others, to welcome him in. Among the first sort we see Zacheus, who being a little man, had got up into a sycamore tree, that he might have the better view of him. The Lord unexpectedly looked up, and called him down, and told him he intended to be his guest; he descended immediately, and went with him to his house, where he attended his Redeemer with the greatest joy.

When he left the city, he was followed by a great company of people, and in the presence of them all, opened the eyes of two blind men, the father and the son, who sat by the way side begging; and they joined the multitude and followed him.

Our blessed Lord had often told his disciples of the cruelties which he should endure, and the ignominious death he should suffer at Jerusalem.

They were well assured too of the design of the Sanhedrim, by the orders they had published to apprehend him. Hence on the way as they drew near the city, their minds were overpowered with fear on the consequences of their arrival; and they were utterly astonished, to see with what alacrity and cheerfulness their Master went before them, as if nothing was to be feared. Their heavy hearts made them walk with tardy steps, so that he outwalked them in the journey. As he knew the fear under which they laboured, he compassionately waited for their coming up; and told them not be dismayed at what should befal him; for the terrible distresses which he should undergo, were in the nature of things, altogether unavoidable, and absolutely necessary. But though he was to suffer most shamefully, and endure the most cruel death, yet he should rise triumphant over all on the third day. Mark x. 32. 33. 34.

Six days before the passover, he arrived in Bethany, and made Lazarus's house his residence. Being in the house of Simon the leper, Mary, in the fulness of her grateful heart, anointed his head and his feet with a valuable ointment, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Judas Iscariot was much displeased with this seeming extravagance; and said, this waste might have been saved, and the ointment sold for the benefit of the poor, and would have taken three hundred pence; which is about nine pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence

sterling. Not that he cared for the poor, as John, his fellow disciple assures us, but because he was a thief, and carried the bag. But the Lord justified her in what she did, and said it was like anointing him for his funeral.

Next day he went to the city; and to fulfil the prophecy concerning the event, and to confirm his disciples that he was really the Messiah, he sent two of them to a certain place which he described, to bring an asses colt, which they should find tied beside its dam, that he might ride into the city upon it.

The disciples went to the place, and found the young ass and brought it to their Master. Some of them laid their clothes upon it, to adorn it as well as they could, to honour their Lord's entry into his royal city, which most of them supposed he was now going to take possession of, and to assume the dignity in which they wished him to appear. The high and lofty One submits, for once, to be carried by a rude, unbroken animal, on which never man had rode; he had often travelled the same way, but never before by borrowed strength. But now the daughter of Zion must rejoice, to see their meek and lowly king coming, riding on an ass, as their ancient prophet had foretold six hundred and twenty years before. Now it might be said to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh.

The report of this strange circumstance soon

reached Jerusalem ; great numbers, who had arrived from various parts of the country, who, doubtless, had seen and heard him often, and, perhaps, had enjoyed the benefits of his saving mercies, both for soul and body, came rushing out of the city to join the procession, and give vent to their joy on the occasion. Now, they might think, the glorious day is come, when we shall see the kingdom restored, and the ancient grandeur established; when the son of David shall assert his rights, and sit upon the throne of his Father. Such carnal, worldly views, occupied almost every mind among the thousands who surrounded the sovereign in his triumphal progress.

To testify the excess of their joy, they covered the road before him with their garments, making them, as it were, a carpet for the feet of the humble steed ; others cut down branches of palm trees, the emblems of peace, and victory, placing them handsomely on each side of the way, carrying the smaller branches in their hands, and with one general acclamation shouted, " Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord :" let the highest prosperity attend the triumphs of this day. In all this they had their Lord's approbation ; whose words are, " Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion ; for, lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord."

Here we have the most evident accomplishment

of those predictions which expressly foretold, or had respect to this solemn event. But the Redeemer of men had very different views from the great multitudes which now surrounded him. No such notions occupied his mind, as had raised his numerous followers to enthusiasm. But he was fulfilling the Scriptures, and on his way further to fulfil them, till all should be accomplished. As he came within sight of the city, and drawing near to it, he was so deeply affected with a knowledge of its sins, and consequent destruction, that he shed tears over it; and, particularly, that they did not know him, by the many evident proofs he had given them, that he was, most certainly, their promised Messiah. But now it was too late to offer any further, by way of mercy and compassion, as he had done for such a length of time. They must henceforth do their part, in the way of cruelty; and hereby prove him to be, what he really was, by fulfilling the Scriptures concerning him, contrary to their own intentions.

Having arrived at the city, he went, not to the palace, to assume the dignity of a king, but to the temple, to display the holiness of God. Hence, the first thing he did, was to drive out those who had again polluted it with their execrable traffic; and to purge the house of God from those abominations with which their covetousness had defiled it.

So general was the joy over the whole city, that the very children had learned the exclamation, and

were singing it in parties through the courts of the temple, and, perhaps, the streets. This, together with the whole transactions of the day, greatly mortified the enemies of the blessed Jesus; hence, some of the most moderate, desired him to put a stop to this seemingly unnecessary uproar; and particularly to the noise of the children, whose shoutings must appear, rather to be an insult on his dignity, than any additional honour. But he answered, that the whole of this was clearly noted in the Scripture, and must all, therefore, come to pass; particularly that of the rejoicing of the children, of which David had spoken by the Holy Spirit of prophesy, upwards of a thousand years before. If, therefore, the evil spirit which blinded their eyes, and filled their minds with malicious prejudice against him, were so far to prevail, as to prevent the glories of this day, by such seemingly improper instruments, the very stones under their feet would immediately cry out, and proclaim the glories of the King of Zion.

Having really, and personally shown himself thus, a few days before the passover, in his royal character, according to the ancient prophecies, which particularly pointed to this; he returned to Bethany with his twelve apostles, to spend the night. The few days he had to spend, were employed in the temple; and his discourses, at this time, are more fully related than any he delivered in the country; except his sermon on the mount,

It was now he had some warm disputes with the various sects, who came to him one after another, whom he put to silence, and exposed their ignorance; he exposed the pride, and denounced most severe woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, lawyers, and hypocrites: he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the cause of it, and lamented over the obstinacy of the city: he informed his disciples of the destruction of the temple, with the city, intimating the means by which it should be effected. He assured them, that he should judge and condemn the wicked at the end of the world, as well as that cruel and impious city. It was now he delivered many apposite and striking parables; particularly of the ten virgins; and the talents: concluding all his ministry with a most solemn description of the final judgment, with its awful, eternal, irreversible consequences.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

We have followed the Son of God, through the principal scenes of his active life, and have seen the wonderful manifestations of his divinity, in all those works of love, mercy, and compassion, which he most generously exercised on every needy

object. Although we have not brought forward every doctrine and miracle, recorded by his sacred historians; yet have, certainly, exhibited sufficient to prove the reality of his incarnation; and to manifest, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that God dwells in humanity: and the human nature of God, is the man Christ Jesus, in whom all the perfections of deity evidently shine, as occasion requires. But we have yet to follow him in his passing through the deep, distressing, and dismal scenes, to which he is now arrived; and to bring another part of our proof from his sufferings. These will display the reality of his human nature with equal evidence.

It is the man, the fellow of Jehovah, we are going to contemplate—the holy One of Israel. That man in whom dwells the fulnes of the godhead bodily; who is, therefore, the most glorious and excellent of his race; worthy to be placed as the head of all principalities and powers; for whose sake nature exists, creatures live, and immortal souls are saved from eternal misery. Whatever view we take of him, he is altogether lovely and engaging. His visible appearance we may well suppose is noble, and commands respect; but the beauty of his person is but the index of his most glorious mind. The exterior form is but of small consideration, when compared with that which makes the man. This man is a living spirit; the most beautiful image of the living God: here it is

not defaced by the fall, nor in any part stained with sin. This is the only man in whom are found all the excellencies of human nature; and, consequently, we might expect to find all that happiness, and joy, which inseparably accompany such perfection. But we are going to see, most fully, that this is a man of sorrows.

How beautiful and glorious was the temple which Solomon built! How rich and splendid were all its furniture and decorations! Here was every thing which nature and art could combine, to make the house of God the wonder of the world. But the incarnate Son of God assures us, it was but a figure of his body; which, saith he, destroy, and I will raise it up in three days. In this sacred temple we see the eternal shechinah; the only begotten of the Father; seen and manifested by the celestial cherubim, who ascended and descended upon the Son of Man; the law of truth and righteousness was within his heart; which was also the seat of love and mercy. He possessed the sweet manna of heaven, communion and fellowship with his Father, in abundance; the rod of power and authority, which could never be without its blooming effects, was immutably laid up in himself.

Hence the grateful incense of pure and human affections, constantly ascending to heaven; the fulness of provision for precious souls; the light of divine truth shining with the oil of grace; all ac-

companied with the shedding, and application of blood. And now, of the passover.

The true lamb of God, who has virtue and efficacy sufficient, to make atonement for the sin of the world, is now arrived at the altar: the Lord hath provided for himself a lamb for a burnt offering, and he is at this hour in the land of Moriah, caught, as it were by the devices of wicked men in consequence of the great power of his doctrine and miracles; so that he cannot escape.—The passover of which the whole world must partake, is going to be sacrificed. Here is a perfect lamb in full strength, found, and detained in the house of Israel, whose preaching between three and four prophetic days, was calculated to awaken the whole family to repentance; as the bleating of the young sheep, which was heard hourly, for four days before its blood was shed, had a tendency to remind the whole family, that they were sinners who deserved to die; but had been most mercifully and miraculously preserved from destruction.

This most pure and holy lamb, after he had made his public entry into Jerusalem, as the undoubted, and rightful king of Zion, in the most meek and humble manner; the day following, which was the fourth before the passover, or literally, the tenth day of the month; he was found daily in the temple, as if he had no liberty to appear any where else in a public capacity. Here he uttered his voice in a plaintive, clear, argumentative stile; manifested

his superiority to the shame of all his opponents; instructed the pious; and comforted the timorous; but notwithstanding, the rulers of the people treated his doctrine and pretensions, as, we may suppose, the people the noise of the bleating, paschal lambs detained in their habitations. The truth, which Jesus delivered, was ungrateful to the Scribes and Pharisees, as the shrill, sharp, repeated lamentations of the famished animals to the ears of such as heard them.

We may also, with good authority, say, that this was the last legal passover, that had the divine authority and approbation attending it; the Son of God, therefore, honours it with his special presence and celebration. Now the shadow must disappear, when the substance applies himself to every part of its typical representation, for a full and honourable accomplishment.

Now the great sacrifice for sin is about to be offered up! The most momentous transaction that can be exhibited on the stage of time, must now come forward. See! offended Heaven, raging hell, tormenting sin, and accursed sinners all fully prepared. The time is come; the fire is kindled; the victim must be slain. Who can describe the tremendous horrors, which now gather thick around this one man. Feeble flesh and blood must shrink, and melt away before such dreadful scenes. It requires the strength and fortitude of God, to meet offended and eternal justice. That man must be more

than all creatures, who can encounter and conquer the infernal legions. He must, of necessity, be supported by omnipotence, who can bear the guilt and punishment, due to a world of sinful miserable creatures. If then his malicious enemies be prepared on the one side, he also is on the other. And now the conflict is just going to begin. Let us attend it as well as we can, in its various steps and progress: and,

First; In the celebration of the passover.

Secondly; The agonies of Gethsemane.

Thirdly; The condemnation before Pontius Pilate.

Fourthly; The crucifixion on Calvary.

First. The celebration of the passover. From the first establishment of this ordinance commences the fourth age of the world. We cannot tarry here to give an account of the occasion, and first institution of it. But from the first to the present, was fifteen hundred and twenty-four years: in all which long period, the Lamb of God was personally pointed out, as the suffering sacrifice for sin. This month, too, which was the beginning of months, was the first, and most memorable of the year in the sacred calendar. Abib, which answers to the latter part of our March, and the first part of April, must be solemnly and unvariably consecrated to this service. The tenth, the fourteenth, and the twenty-second day must be particularly observed of every true Israelite; yea the hour is important;

between the two evenings, *i. e.* between the latter part of the fourteenth, and the beginning of the fifteenth of the month; from three in the afternoon, till nine at night, according to our mode of reckoning.

So in the evening of the old dispensation, which was now vanishing away, came the true paschal lamb to be sacrificed for us; to restore the souls of men from sin to holiness; to renovate the cause of truth and divine worship; and introduce that new dispensation which should be cœval with the celestial rulers of day and night.

Accordingly, the incarnate Son of God, knowing that the time was fully come, and that the things which had been foretold of him must punctually be accomplished. He sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, on the morning of the fourteenth day of the month Abib or Nisan, from Bethany to Jerusalem, to make preparation for the celebration of this most solemn concluding passover. In his orders he gave them another manifestation of his prescience, or infinite knowledge. He told them that as soon as they entered into the city, they should meet a man carrying a pitcher of water; they must go after him into the house he should go into, and inform the master, that he intended to eat the passover with his disciples in one of his rooms: they went and followed their directions, and made preparations for the solemnities of the evening.

During the preceeding four days, when the Lord

had shown himself so openly, preached so warmly, reasoned so conclusively, and triumphed so victoriously in the temple; the Sanhedrim or great council of the nation, had many consultations how they might get him into their hands. They durst not proceed to open violence, because of the populace which would immediately have taken the alarm, and defended him if he had been openly insulted: but to relieve them of all their anxieties on this head, Judas, one of his followers, an intimate friend, one of his family, an apostle, a leading servant in his house, by office a treasurer, came to the council chamber, and offered his services to deliver his Lord and Master into their hands, if they would give him a reward suitable to the enterprise.

It is highly probable, this traitor accompanied the other two from the village to the city; as he carried the cash, it would be necessary for him to be with them to pay for what they bought, and as the overseer general, see that all was right: when finished, he might leave the guest-chamber and his fellow disciples, and repair to the council-chamber, to the enemies of his master; or he might step aside from them in the temple, while they were shedding the blood of the lamb, which according to custom must die there, and go into their hall and offer his services as it was just at hand, which done, he might join them again, and assist them to finish the ceremony, and carry the flesh to the fire at which it was to be roasted. Whether it was the same day,

or a day or two before is not material; but it seems evident that he offered his services to the council before the celebration; and from the time that Mary the sister of Lazarus, anointed her Lord with the precious ointment, in the house of Simon the leper, it seems he entertained the horrid design, and acted the part of a spy on all his Master's conduct.

The apointed hour came, and Jesus arrived from Bethany at the guest-chamber, and with the twelve sat down to supper.

When they were all placed around the table, he told them, that he fervently desired to eat this passover with them before his death, because of the great and important concerns which were connected with it; as it was the last, it had an immediate relation to his person and sufferings, by virtue of which, the wrath of God, and all the miseries of eternal exclusion from his presence, should pass over, and by no means hurt any who did believe, or ever, to the end of time, should receive him by faith. There was therefore more in this, than in any preceding celebration of it; for never before, was the substance of this shadow so evidently present: and although, he had personally celebrated it before, yet never in a public official capacity, nor perhaps, with the twelve in this particular and solemn manner; choosing rather to eat it with the members of his own family, who are also called his brethren according to the flesh; but now his brethren according to the spirit were his chosen com-

panions, and with them he had particular reasons for this most solemn interview. He therefore told them, that *he heartily desired it.*

The Searcher of Hearts well knew what was the true state of all their minds; and saw their honesty, sincerity, and affection, Judas excepted. Now he wished to give them the utmost evidence of his personal regard, to confirm every pious motive he found in them, and to establish them in the office to which he had elected them.

He now proceeded to bless the provisions they were to partake of; whether in the form of words in common use, is not said, nor is it of any importance to us. He first took the cup filled with wine in his hand, and gave thanks, and gave it to the beloved disciple who sat next to him, which was John, and to them all in order; after the same manner, he took the bread and holding it in both his hands, gave thanks for the fruit of the earth; then they began to eat the passover. While they were eating, his sacred mind became deeply affected with the solemn service, and with the horrid sin of Judas, which was working powerfully in the traitor's mind; this, the omniscient Son of God was no stranger to from the very first entrance of it; he now saw the execrable antitype of Ahithopel, the hypocritical deceiver of his great ancestor David, at the table eating of his bread. He now exposed him to his own conscience, and declared before them all, that one of them was about to

betray him to his enemies; they were all alarmed at this, except him who knew himself to be the person, and each said in his own mind, Is it I? Is it I? with amazement and fear.

The manner of celebrating this feast was peculiar; the guests surrounded the circular table, in an inclining or leaning posture; lying on the left side on the couches, or sofas, which were made on purpose for such occasions. The master of the feast was always in the first and most honourable place, and leaned on the end of the sofa, with his legs close to the back: the next most respectable and intimate friend reclined on his bosom, laying his head on the master's breast, placing his legs in the same manner: the third, leaning on the second: and the fourth on the third, and so on till the seat was filled. Here see, the incarnate God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob, supporting the sacred family, and teaching them how to support each other, and especially at his holy table. John, whom his Lord had a very tender affection for, in this posture was next him. Peter, at some distance, made such signs to John, as gave him to understand, that he wished him to enquire who he meant was to be the traitor. He asked in such a low voice, that none of the rest could tell what he said, and received an answer in the same condescending manner.

This festival was celebrated with the juice or bitter herbs, mixed with vinegar, made into a thick sauce or thin paste; similar perhaps to mustard.

In this they dipped the bread which they eat at supper. The Lord, to give an intimation to his beloved disciple of the person, took a piece of bread and dipped it in the sauce, and gave it to Judas Iscariot; for he had told him, that the disciple to whom he should give it was he. Very soon after he took a piece of bread and dipped in the sauce for himself, and Judas did the same, as if by accident, at the same time; on which to relieve the minds of his afflicted disciples, still harrassed with the fear of such infernal treason, he said, he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish the same shall betray me: the traitor immediately made answer, and said, Master, is it I? The Lord replied, you have just said it *.

Finding himself thus detected, and openly exposed to all his brethren, satan immediately seized the opportunity, and wrought up his covetous heart to the utmost rage, arming him with the keen-

* The words of our blessed Lord respecting the treason of Judas, as they are stated by the evangelist Luke, immediately after the institution of the Lord's supper, might lead the inattentive to think, that Judas actually partook of this divine ordinance, but the other three evangelists have given the same words in connection with the passover, and before the celebration of the supper; the words are, "But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me at the table. The time these words were spoken, was in the eating of the passover: after carefully comparing together the various places, I am satisfied, the light in which this matter is placed, is not very distant from the truth of the real transaction. Vide Piscator, Guise, Brown, cum multis aliis

est resentment and revenge. In a few minutes he rose and went off, and as he was going out, Jesus said to him, do the business you are going about speedily. He then addressed the eleven, and said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and immediately glorify him;" intimating, the honour and glory that should consequently arise to God in all his essential perfections, and to himself, as the mediator between God and man from this woeful treason.

The enemy of God and man now triumphs in Judas, on his way to the grand council: he comes into the assembly to add strength to their resolutions, and to take the management of them into his own hands; to procure the office of lieutenant-general to the troops of hell; to sell his Redeemer and his soul together, for thirty pieces of silver; or three pounds, fifteen shillings sterling.

But to return to the divine assembly in the guest chamber: when the celebration of the passover was finished, the incarnate Son of God instituted a sacramental, commemorative supper; to be a standimg memorial of the awful solemnities of that night, and the following day; which should, to the end of time, remind his disciples of his deep sorrows and bloody sufferings for them. At the same table, in the same hour, and with the same elements, as celebrated the last legal passover, the evangelical is instituted. The same authority

which gave being to the first, now supercedes it, and establishes the second to stand for ever.

After they had taken a sufficient refreshment in eating the paschal lamb, before the table was removed, or any thing taken from it; he took bread in his hand, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, DRINK YE ALL OF IT: for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

In these words, he instituted this service; and hereby leaves a pledge of his love to all his followers in every age; commanding them to celebrate this ordinance in remembrance of him; for as often as they should do it, it would show forth his death, till he should come again at the end of the world: and they would most effectually be profited in their souls, by the excercise of their faith in his atoning sacrifice, and of their love to his exalted person; and, likewise, they would give public testimony to one another, and to the whole world of their regard to, and union with him.

When all was finished, and the chamber cleared, it would seem, that he immediately prepared to wash their feet: girding a towel about him, he performed this act of humility, and wiped them with it; assuring them, that he did this to give them an example of humility and charity one to another: and I doubt not, to administer a reproof

to the contentions, which they had just before expressed, which should be the greatest among them.

He employed the remaining part of the evening in familiar conversation, explaining the principles of love, and directing them in the mutual exercise of it; telling them, that the best proof of their affection to him would be their obedience to his commands, which would lead them to the heavenly mansions in his Father's house, where he was going. He spoke some things which some of them did not understand; particularly, respecting himself, as one with the Father; and the only person by whom he could be known or enjoyed: he described the connection subsisting between him and the church, under the metaphor of a vine and its branches; gave them special promises, particularly that the Holy Ghost should be his successor, and should direct, support, and comfort them, in all the future part of their lives. The agency of this divine person he holds out fully; and frequently makes mention of him in his discourse; reminding them, that they must be equally submissive to his dictates, as they had been from the beginning to his direction. That he should explain to them fully the meaning and intent of what they had heard him preach; and should enable them to pray to the Father, in the name of the Son.

He told them of the persecutions, sorrows, and heavy afflictions, they would be exposed to from the world for his sake; but that in the midst of all

they should be supported, and enjoy that inward, heavenly satisfaction in their own minds, which would more than compensate all they should endure on his account: for as he had overcome so should they. He informed them of the transactions of that very night, in which all of them should fulfil that ancient prophecy, that the sheep should be scattered when the shepherd was smitten; and that Peter should deny him, as certainly as Judas betray him.

Before they left the guest-chamber they joined in celebrating the praises of God, in an hymn suited to the occasion; supposed by many to be a part of the hundred and eighteenth psalm, and often sung at this solemnity; the latter part of which, has a particular respect to the person of the Messiah, and the treatment he should meet with from the rulers of the synagogue. The Lord then finished the whole with that most appropriate intercessory prayer, which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's history; the illustration of which would require a separate volume; but here we cannot enlarge, as we are going to follow the suffering sacrifice for sin, to the scene of his most dreadful agonies; where the precious, blessed, most holy soul of the Son of Man, is, as it were, to be burned in the flames of divine wrath; to make atonement for the sins of a world. They, therefore, are laid upon, and imputed to him: these are the cause,

Secondly, Of his agonies in Gethsemane. These

were all of a spiritual nature; and, therefore, cannot be fully exhibited by any description: but it was here, he felt the wrath of God against sin most sensibly; and here he was apprehended as the victim who was to be sacrificed for it.

When all was concluded, he went with the eleven disciples over the brook Cedron, which runs through the valley of Jehoshaphat; called also, the valley of the son of Hinnon, and separated the mount of Olives, from mount Moriah, on which the temple stood. Here were many gardens, wherein olives, vines, figs, and other fruits were cultivated; on this hill stood a small village called Gethsemane, into one of the gardens belonging to it, the blessed Jesus frequently went with his disciples for private conversation and devotion, and, of course, Judas very well knew the place. They went immediately thither, as if for retirement and meditation, before they went to Bethany to spend the night, but the Lord well knew every step that was taking, and that he should never see the beloved village on this side of death.

If we may be allowed to suppose, that two hours were spent in the celebration of the passover, and that they sat down to supper at eight o'clock, which would be as soon as it was dark: then it must be ten or later, before they entered the garden. If Judas left them at nine, which I suppose he might, he had three hours to muster his forces, receive his commission, and march to the scene

of operations, for it was about midnight when he arrived.

As soon as the sacred company had entered the fruitful orchard in this prolific vale, the Lord ordered eight of them to watch at the gate, and to pray to God to keep them from being carried away with the floods of ungodly men who should very soon appear; that they might not like Judas become traitors, and join with those who came to take him, as satan would now attempt to persuade them; he then took Peter, James, and John further into the garden, that they might be witnesses of this most solemn, awful, and tremendous conflict: a conflict between the divine and human nature; the righteous Father, and the incarnate Son; the Son of God and all the sins of men; the Son of Man and all the powers of darkness that could issue out of the gulph of hell.

It is well observed, that as the devil first ruined the human nature, and brought forth sin in the fruitful, prolific, divinely ordered garden of Eden, in the terrestrial paradise; so the Son of God, then promised to be the seed of the woman, did, in the garden of Gethsemane, suffer the direful effects of that days transgression, as well as of all the sins of a redeemed world, to the termination of time itself; who can calculate the mighty sum of debt due to all the perfections of God, from each person of the infinite multitudes of those, whom the sufferings of the Saviour now represented? Now the demand is

actually made, and must be paid; the immutable, inflexible justice of the almighty, eternal Sovereign must be satisfied; the insults offered the essential necessary, and infinite Majesty must be atoned for; the divine law dishonoured by sin, had long suspended its fury, but this is the person, time, and place, in whom it is to be fully magnified; here it unfolds its demands and points out every unit, insisting on payment; nor will quit its claim till his sacred life be taken, and his most precious blood be shed: nor does it admit of any mitigation of pain, ignominy, or cruelty, that the instruments of death can inflict upon him. Being fully sensible of all this, and feeling it more pointedly than it is possible for finite minds to conceive of or express, it is no wonder we are told, *that he began to be sore amazed and very heavy*; and that he declared unto his select disciples, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.*

As yet; he but saw the fire, and was just approaching it. It was the displeasure of God against sin; his wrath justly enflamed, burning with the fiercest rage, which no other creature could approach, or even dare to look at. Mortal eyes could not discern it; it was kindled on purpose for this victim; it was, therefore, more intolerable than any thing the body could suffer. It pleased the Lord to make his *soul* an offering for sin; and, therefore, to bruise him, and put him to grief.

The holy soul of this divine man, was oppressed with the weight of sin, more particularly from the time of eating the passover. Through the whole of life he was a man of sorrows; the sorrows of calumny and persecution followed him through his ministry; but a great measure of them, we may suppose, arose from the certainty of the infinite woes, which he must this night endure: he, therefors, tells his three chosen companions, that his soul was *exceeding sorrowful*: his heart like wax was melted in the midst of his bowels; the Lord was afflicting him in the day of his fierce anger; terror and astonishment well nigh overpowered him; his sorrows were greater than a mere creature could bear, they were exceeding beyond measure; he felt in himself the insufferable effects of sin, and was sore amazed in every power of his soul; the holiness of his nature now suffering from such a detested cause, made his agonies so much the more grievous; under all this unspeakable grief, he desired them to watch, and pray, as he had told the others at the gate.

He then withdrew, and went a little further by himself, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, but if not I submit to thy will. His sacred sinless nature, here manifests an innocent aversion to suffering; but if the salvation of sinners cannot otherwise be obtained, he freely submits to the utmost demands of law and justice. O what love to

miserable creatures is here! It is not possible, they can be saved, till he drinks the poisonous bitter cup of sin; and, lo! the Son of God submits to take it from the hand of his Father, and drink it up to the very dregs.

He returned, as if to seek some comfort and assistance from his disciples, but he found them asleep; awaking them, he said to boasting and courageous Peter, how surprising is it, Peter, that you who just declared, that you would die for me, cannot watch with me one hour. He then returned, and went to the place he came from, and prostrating himself upon the earth, as before, offered up the same petition to his Father, but received no answer. He came again to his disciples, and found them asleep, for they were overpowered with fatigue and sorrow.

He left them a third time, and being in an *agony*, he prayed more earnestly, offering up the same petition. And now nature began to sink, and though the night was cold, he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, which fell in clots upon the ground; and an angel from heaven came to refresh and strengthen him. See the pressure of his holy, righteous, innocent soul now drinking the cup of sin, mixed with all the bitterness of the wrath of God. The sins of all the blessed in heaven; of all the redeemed now in the earth, both of Jews and Gentiles; of all of the elect human race, yet to be born to the last moment of time. Sins of all kinds

and descriptions, of thoughts, words, and actions (public, private, or secret) against God or man; sins of the soul and of the body, of the infinite multitudes of the redeemed world, scattered through all generations, nations, peoples, and languages; all meet in this cup, and the Son of God of necessity must drink it:—it cannot possibly pass from him, because if it did, the end of his incarnation must be defeated, satan and sin must triumph, and man be irrecoverably lost.

The sins of the soul and of the body are united in this cup; spiritual sins rise to the top; of these his soul must partake in the garden in the first place; by this draught his spirits are turned, as it were, into gall and wormwood; he feels the bitterness of death in a manner superior to any, or to all the souls, that ever descended into hell. And having finished this part, the second shall follow him to the cross, where every member of his body, shall feel the effects of those gross pollutions of the flesh, which must also be destroyed.

We may be allowed, here, to add the buffettings of those spiritual enemies, who had been permitted to ascend from the regions of torment, to increase the sorrows of his soul. It was now the hour in which the powers of darkness were suffered to spend their utmost fury, by insulting his pure, and holy mind; urging upon him, the folly and vanity of his pretensions; the blasphemy of assuming the divine names he was called by among his deluded

followers, that he was nothing but a weak, insignificant impostor, and deserved the damnation of hell more than any devil there: his pretended doctrine was delusion, and the many wonderous works he had performed, were deceits, imposed on the senses of those who saw and heard them. "Poor worthless creature," they might urge, "how couldest thou entertain the fancy of being the Redeemer of men and the Saviour of a world! thou art frightened to death, at the threatenings of the high-priest, and the council of the Jews, who, very properly, pursue thee, and seek to get thee into their hands, that they may do thee justice, at least, in confining thee to some of their dungeons, till thy flesh be withered from thy bones, and thy soul becomes our triumph, in the regions of damnation." Thus we may view them, incessantly throwing fire brands, arrows, and death, at the man who was only able to contend with sin, and the wrath of God.

Another bitter ingredient in this cup, we may well suppose, was the treachery of Judas, and the inconstancy of all his disciples. By his omniscience he knew perfectly what was going forward in the city, under the direction of his pretended friend. In a moral point of view, this was a cutting circumstance; infidelity, and the most black ingratitude, is the least that can be said of it; to which, add, in a few minutes, perhaps much within the hour, all his dear friends, whom he loved with very tender affection, would be driven from him; and for very

fear of themselves, would desert him, and fly for their lives; so that among all the people there could not be found a single person, from whose condolence or advice he might receive the smallest comfort. Thus, at great length, were it needful, we might carry on our illustration of the exceeding sorrows of his soul. But,

He returned to the three disciples, and found them still asleep; awaking them he said, now you may sleep on and take your rest, if you prefer it to running any further risk with me: the time is up, in which the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. But if you choose to accompany me, rise up and let us go, for the traitor, with his companions, is just at hand. They hardly had joined the other disciples, who were left at the entrance of the garden, before Judas appeared with a great multitude, armed with swords, and staves, and many of them carrying torches, or lighted flambeaus, to give the better light; although, it was the full of the moon, and now, being midnight, might shine in her brightest splendor.

Judas on the way had given the officers who attended him, a sign by which they might identify the person of the Lord, which was, by saluting him in their presence. This infernal friendship was first to be shown, and should open the way to all the hellish, brutal treatment, that insulted innocency could suffer. Here he comes at the head of his troops; and as soon as he saw the blessed and

sacred person, he boldly came up to him, and said, Hail Master, and kissed him. To whom he meekly replied; *Friend, why are you come hither? Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?* Then stepping forward with undaunted courage, and a majestic air, he demanded of them who they wanted. They answered, Jesus of Nazareth. He told them, he was the man. Feeling a divine power accompanying this open declaration, they all retreated backward, and fell prostrate on the ground. By this they had full proof, that they could not apprehend him, if it had not been his pleasure to deliver himself up. But he suffered them to recover themselves, and again asked the same question, which they answered in the same words. I have told you said he, that I am the person. If then you seek me only, you will suffer my disciples to go away unmolested; manifesting his intire affection for them, and the utmost care for their safety.

Peter having a sword, now drew it in his Master's defence, and lifting it to cleave the head of one of the most busy in assaulting him, missed the blow he designed, and only cut off his right ear. Jesus reproved him for this intemperate rashness, and exerted his divine power to heal him; that he might carry to his master, the high-priest, two clear evidences that he was a divine person, and could as easily have fastened the multitude of his persecutors to the earth, never to arise against him any more, as cure his ear with the touch of his finger.

But being the true paschal lamb, he submitted to be bound, and was conducted to the place of shedding his blood, where he must offer in sacrifice his most holy life, and fully obtain eternal redemption for sinners.

Seeing their blessed Master a prisoner, and bound like a criminal, in the hands of his enemies, the disciples all fled, each one to shift, as well as he could, for himself: though it would seem, that John stuck to his beloved Lord, as much as it was possible, and Peter, racked between courage and cowardice, followed after at a great distance. Of the remainder, we have no account whither they went; but it is not improbable to Bethany, to carry the dismal tidings of the night, and the concluding scene of his apprehension to the pious disciples there.

While they were busy in securing him, he remonstrated with the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders, who were the leaders of the multitude, on the manner of their present conduct; asking them, why they came armed, as if he were a common thief. He had given them, he said, many opportunities to apprehend him in the temple, which they never had done. It was altogether unreasonable that they should thus insult his known innocency; but he told them, that now they were wholly under the infatuation of the powers of darkness, which should predominate but a very short time.

Now they led him away, bound like the mighty Sampson, as if he were blind and shorn of his locks, to be the subject of their mirth for the night, and the whole of the next day. What joy did the infernal spirits now feel, that their avowed enemy was in safe custody; in the hands of those men, whom they had stirred up to revenge their quarrel against him. Those devils, which he had cast out of their possessions in such numbers, might now triumph over him; gathering thick around him like bees, they might torment his sacred mind with their malicious stings, and inspire the mad multitude to shout the victory they had obtained; now the troubler of their repose should no more molest them, and they should presently return to those from whom they were ejected; and each take seven spirits with him more vile than himself, and in a little time, perhaps, obtain the government of the Jews scattered over the face of the earth.

They brought him first to Annas, who, it is probable, was sagan, or the next in office to the high-priest; he had been himself in that office fifteen years, and was father-in-law to Caiaphas. Here they might call with their prisoner, to assure the old man of their success, who had, it is probable, signed the commission to take him; and to send notice to the high-priest, to take his seat in the council, and have the whole body ready when he came into court that they might proceed immediately to his examination. It does not ap-

pear, that Annas asked the blessed Jesus any questions, but sent him, bound as he was, to the palace of Caiaphas, who, with all his suffragans, were waiting for him.

When he appeared at the bar, the high-priest asked him about his disciples and doctrine. To the last of which he replied, saying, "I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. This manly, intrepid, but rational answer, provoked one of the officers which was attending, and he struck Jesus with a rod, asking him, how he durst return such an impertinent answer to the high-priest. To whom he said, if I have spoken any thing contrary to truth, you ought to testify against the falsity; but if not, why do you strike me?

They then called up all the witnesses, who had any thing to alledge against the prisoner; but they had nothing to say of any importance; only two, seemed to agree in one thing, which was, that they heard him say, I will destroy this temple, and build it again in three days. This however was a manifest perversion of his words, for they were, "Destroy this temple;" intimating, that they would destroy his body in putting him to death, but that it should rise again within that time. But to all their insulting questions he gave no answer;

and as a lamb, being silent, said nothing. He endured the contradiction of sinners.

After some time spent in hearing false accusations, and receiving no replies, Caiaphas called upon him in the most solemn manner, and in the name of the living God, to declare in possitive terms, whether he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. This he immediately acknowledged, in the fullest and most unequivocal stile; declaring, that hereafter they should see him, who was also the son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. On this, the high-priest rent his garment, in detestation of what he heard; saying, he hath spoken blasphemy; we have no occasion for any more witnesses. Appealing to the council, he said, What think ye? They all pronounced him guilty of death as a blasphemer. They then broke up, and left him in the hands of the officers for the remaining part of the night.

Peter, who had followed afar off, came to the palace of the high-priest, to see what would become of his master. He gained admission into the hall, by means of his fellow disciple John, and, no doubt, heard the sentence of death pronounced. He was attacked three different times, as one of Jesus disciples; but he barefacedly denied him, and the last time with oaths and imprecations: on which the Lord, amidst all the insults and cruelties he was suffering, turned round and looked on him; as if he would say, ah, Peter, is this thy courage and

kindness to thy friend? This notice of him, from the eye of his master, might turn the eyes of the whole company on him, and shame him out of countenance. He went out immediately, and in passing through the porch the cock crew the second time, and fully brought to recollection, what the Lord had told him in the evening, at the celebration of the passover, when he was boasting what he would do and suffer for him; and when Jesus said, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. Reflecting on what had passed, he was cut to the heart, and wept bitterly for it.

In the mean time, the innocent sufferer underwent the grossest insults from the rude scoffers in whose hands he was left. Then did they blindfold him, and spit in his face, and buffetted him, and smote him with rods, or with the palms of their hands, saying, prophesy unto us, who is he that smote thee. How soon could the divine power of this most blessed man have extricated him from the barbarous, cruel treatment he was now suffering. But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

DISCOURSE XII.

THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

NEVER did creation witness such an awful scene as this fourteenth of the month Nisan exhibits. The four thousand and thirty-fourth year of our world's age is made eternally memorable by the circumstances which surround the person of its Creator: and we may assure ourselves, that all the ages of eternity shall never produce such another solemnity. Can imagination conceive, or can faith credit, the astonishing report, that the Lord of life is exposed to death! The Creator of all things insulted by a number of most wretched criminals! That he who shall sit in judgment on all rational, responsible creatures, is himself judged by one of the worst! Cast out of the church of his own chosen people! Condemned by the state that rules the known world, and acts by his authority? Whether credited or not, we are going to illustrate that it is certainly so: and therefore we go forward with the history of the unspeakable deep humiliation of him, who is more than a man of God, or a prophet of eminent rank; him, who is, in the most exalted sense, the god-man, and who redeems the souls of men with his own blood. In this discourse we have to consider his condemna-

tion and crucifixion; in both which we propose to illustrate the leading particulars; the first of these is a third and principal article in this momentous passover; we shall therefore attend to,

Thirdly, The condemnation before Pontius Pilate. As soon as it was sufficiently light in the morning, the council assembled again in their room in the temple, and ordered the meek and patient victim, whom they had condemned to death before the time of the cock crowing, to be brought before them. They demanded of him, whether he stood to his former declaration. Well knowing the hardness of their hearts, and their determined resolutions against him; he told them, that his answer would by no means convince them; and that such was their obstinacy, that they would neither attempt to confute him, nor dismiss him: but that, hereafter, they should find the truth of his declaration, when he should be exalted to the right hand of God. They put the question to him a second time, demanding in positive terms, *whether he was the Son of God:* to which he answered in the affirmative. They then declared with one consent, *we need no further evidence, we have his condemnation from his own mouth.*

Judas's conscience now began to awaken upon him; he repented of his treason, and throwing down the money he had taken to betray his Master in the room before them, confessed he had betrayed innocent blood; and in the torment of his

soul went out and hanged himself on a tree, from which he fell headlong, and bursting asunder, his bowels fell out of his body in a wonderful manner, which was much noticed by all the inhabitants of the city.

The Sanhedrim having condemned the blessed Man to death for supposed blasphemy, they bound him, and hurried him away as soon as possible to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. He had now been procurator of Judea between six and seven years: a man thoroughly prepared for all manner of iniquity, which he accordingly executed throughout his government, as we are informed by Josephus: Philo charges him with being guilty of selling justice, giving any sentence for money, of rapines, of injuries, of murders, of unjust tormentings, of putting men arbitrarily to death, without process or sentence of law, and of excessive cruelty through the whole of his administration. A man of such a character was a fit instrument to execute the cruelty which the council demanded upon this most righteous and holy person, whom they charged with imposture and blasphemy.

The whole multitude which was present at his examination, and joined in the sentence passed upon him, accompanied him to the hall of judgment. Their superstition would not permit them to enter it, lest they should contract some ceremonial defilement in the house of a heathen, which would disqualify them for the remaining services

of the passover, which were to continue seven days more. Ah! little did they know what guilt they were now plunging themselves into in the sight of God, by this unmerited persecution. It is needless to say they were persecuting God himself in the person of his only begotten Son, whom their self-righteous bigotry prevented them from knowing.

To gratify them, Pilate came out and received their prisoner at his palace gate, of whom he demanded what accusation they had against him. They said, if he had not been a malefactor they would not have brought him to his tribunal; adding, we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king.

Jesus was taken into the hall, called the prætorium, while the governor was taking the accusation; and hearing that he laid claim to a royal character, went in to take his examination on that head; thinking himself concerned to enquire into that, as it was a question of a political nature, and had a particular respect to the imperial crown, and the dignity of the Roman empire. Pilate asked, if he was the king of the Jews: to which he answered, by asking him, whether he asked that question of his own accord, or whether he was accused of saying so: to which he replied, I am not one of your nation; and therefore have nothing to do with your religion, of which I am not a pro-

per judge: nor, so far as I can find, is this the reason why the chief priests have delivered you unto me. I must know of yourself, what you have done in relation to the state; and whether you have aspired at the royal character. Jesus answered, I am indeed a king; and therefore I came into the world; I was born to reign; but my kingdom is quite of a different nature from any now in existence: it is a spiritual, immortal, immutable, kingdom, in which the souls of men are subjects; founded in, and shall be maintained by, eternal truth; and every one who hears and understands this truth becomes my subject. It is not opposed to any mode of civil government; but is really accommodated for the benefit of all. If my authority were of an earrhly nature, my followers would, before now, have been enrolled and embodied; so that they would have prevented my being delivered to the Jews.

Hearing such a declaration from a man in such circumstances, was utterly astonishing to the governor; it went beyond all the rules of credibility. Surprised to see a poor abandoned person assume sovereignty, he asked him, in a deriding way, what he meant by truth. But having no desire to engage in matters, which he supposed related only to the Jewish religion, he rose suddenly from the bench, and taking Jesus with him, told them that he found no fault at all in the man. The chief priests and senators accused him again of many

crimes: but the Lord made no reply to any thing they could urge. The governor pressed him to answer them, but he still held his peace and said nothing; at which he greatly wondered; and so much the more as he now saw clearly that it was the malice of the Jews which was the ground of all their accusations against him. He could not, with all his subtilty, discover any other reason for this prosecution; and therefore warmly took the part of injured innocency.

The rulers and the multitude finding the governor so ready to release him, cried out more vehemently against him; saying, he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. Pilate hearing that he was of Galilee, inquired into the certainty of it; and finding that he had lived in, and belonged to, that province, determined immediately to send him to Herod Antipas, the governor of Galilee, who was now at Jerusalem to attend the feast. This is the same Herod who put John Baptist to death. He was the son of Herod the great, who sought to destroy the blessed Jesus when he was a child; and now lived in adultery and incest with his brother Philip's wife. Pilate might have two reasons for this condescension to Herod; first, to oblige an enemy, and, as it were, purchase his friendship, by putting into his power a person of such importance in his country: and, secondly, to get quit of a business which he did

not like, by any means, to be troubled with, being satisfied of the integrity of the accused, and of the ill-grounded malice of the Jewish council, and the enraged multitude.

Herod was mightily pleased when he saw Jesus. He had often heard of his fame, and now expected to have his curiosity gratified, by seeing him perform some miracle. But the blessed Benefactor of men, who never declined manifesting his divine power and mercy to the needy and indigent, would not prostitute his abilities before a proud, polluted, and cruel tyrant. He would not thus cast his pearls before swine, although his life was now at stake; nor so much as give him an answer to any of his questions. Hence, instead of considering him as a rival king, he looked upon him as a most insignificant, despicable person, worthy of the utmost contempt and scorn. He therefore delivered him to the insults and cruelty of his guards, who derided him as a mock king; and, to carry their derision to the greatest extent, they clothed him with some old gorgeous cast-off robe, and returned him, in this habit, to Pilate. These two governors were upon some occasion at variance between themselves, but now were reconciled, and became hearty friends. Thus worldly wicked men agree in persecuting the innocent and righteous servants of God, and often lose their enmity to each other by cementing their friendship with the blood of the saints.

What a rueful spectacle, we may well suppose, was this divine man passing along the streets of Jerusalem, from palace to palace, bound like a criminal, now habited with mock royalty! How did his enemies look and stare, and rejoice over him! How were the hearts of his numerous friends pierced and overcome with grief to behold him! Being returned to Pilate, he immediately called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, and said to them, ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in him, touching those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him; and lo nothing worthy of death is done unto him, I will therefore chastise him and release him.

This proposal of chastising him was offered in compliance with their fury against him, which he knew arose wholly from their envy and malice, but had not the effect he intended; for nothing would satisfy them but his condemnation and death.

Pilate invented another contrivance to save him: being obliged, by an ancient custom, to release, at the passover, such a prisoner as the people required: at this time, there was a notorious malefactor in prison, named Barabbas, who headed an insurrection in the city, in which himself had been guilty of murder. Justly imagining, that if he

proposed Jesus, a good and innocent man, and Barabbas, a noted thief and a murderer, they certainly would prefer the former to the latter; he therefore told them, that he found no crime worthy of death in the person they accused; but since they had a custom to have a criminal set at liberty at this solemnity, he proposed to them to choose one of the two, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ. He spoke this to the people, who were chiefly concerned in this matter, and whom he knew were better affected to the Lord than the rulers. But when he put the question to them a second time, they all cried out, away with this man, and give us Barabbas. The populace knew the sentiments of their leaders; and the majority present would do according to their instructions, being, we may be assured, the scum of the city.

He was greatly embarrassed in his mind, and knew not what other course to take to save the prisoner: his difficulty was greatly increased by a message which he received from his wife, while he was sitting on the tribunal, most earnestly warning him not to do any thing against that just man, on whom he sat in judgment; for that morning, before she awoke out of sleep, she said she had suffered much in a dream on his account, and was certain that he was a righteous person. This dream, I doubt not, was occasioned by an heavenly messenger, to attest to the Gentile nations, by the wife of the judge, the innocence and integrity of him who

was to be, in a very short time, the light of the Gentiles. In consequence of this message, he laboured more earnestly to obtain their consent to release him, but all in vain; for they all cried out, to put him to the most shameful death; not only demanding justice, as if he had been a more flagrant sinner than Barabbas, but prescribing also the mode of punishment, which was by crucifixion, a death the most cruel that could be named, and inflicted only on slaves.

The governor urged them a third time, to specify the crimes he had committed; for he, after the strictest examination, could find nothing deserving condemnation: he was therefore determined so far to gratify them as to scourge him, and then he should be discharged. Upon this they became more furious than ever: they redoubled their clamours, and in the most tumultous manner imaginable, required that he might be crucified, which so overpowered the judge that their voices prevailed. But hoping yet to awaken their pity and compassion to a bleeding afflicted object, whose life he was desirous of sparing, he gave orders that he should be immediately scourged, which was done, doubtless with extraordinary severity; as we find the soldiers immediately after adding many cruelties and indignities besides. They had indeed ploughed long furrows on his blessed body with their instruments of torment: now the whole cohort gathers around him, to insult and make their

sport of him, as had been done twice before: first, in the high priest's palace; secondly, by Herod's men of war; and now, thirdly, by the Roman soldiers. In the first place, he gave his cheeks to the smiters, and his face to them that plucked off the the hair: for they blindfolded him, and smote him with their hands, saying, in derision, prophesy, who is he that smote thee. In the second, they clothed him in mock purple; derided him, and set him at nought. But here, we find his miseries accumulated beyond precedent. His sacred body torn in the common hall, or guard-room, in a most severe manner; now they set him down, perhaps on a common bench, bleeding under his wounds: they wreath a circle of pricking thorns, in imitation, as near as they could, of a royal diadem, and place it on his blessed head, to insult his regal pretensions: they next put a stalk of cane, called a reed, into his hand for a sceptre; and then bring an old cast-off watch-cloak, and cover him with it, like an emperor clothed in royal purple. Thus wounded, thus habited, they add affliction to the afflicted, and deride him whom God hath smitten. They scornfully bow the knee, and jeeringly say, all health and prosperity to the king of the Jews. Some, more wanton and cruel, strike him on the head, either to fasten his thorny crown firmer, or to beat it entirely off: whether they directed their blows in a parallel or horizontal way, the effect would be the same to the meek and patient suf-

ferer. The precious blood from his temples must eventually trickle down and mix with that, which had been plowed from his lacerated sides and shoulders. See, how they, as many as choose, spit in his face, and strike him on his cheek with their hands, and wound his divine mind with their reproaches! They give loose to their wanton cruelty, in every possible direction, and glut their savage barbarity, in heaping woes on a guiltless innocent man.

Pilate now imagined, that the Jews could not behold him in this pitiable condition without remorse. He, therefore, brought him before them again, habited in all his mock ornaments, crowned with thorns, the reed in his hand, with his ignominious robe of state; his head, face, and body all embrewed with blood. Then he cried to the multitude, BEHOLD THE MAN! As if he had said, behold this rueful spectacle of suffering innocence, and be confounded.

But as soon as they saw their once expected king (whom they but a few days before hailed as the son of David, their promised Messiah; and before whom they spread their garments in the way) in such a miserable condition, they cried out with more vehemence than before, Crucify him, crucify him. Their carnal views of a great and mighty monarch, which then operated so powerfully in their minds, were now totally blasted; their expectations being altogether frustrated, they gave vent to their disappointments in the most malicious re-

sentment; and, therefore, demanded his immediate death, in the most cruel, barbarous manner. Pilate wishing to have nothing further to do in a matter which was so much contrary to his own private judgment, said to them; Do ye take him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him. They replied, we have a particular law according to which he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. Hearing this, though a wicked, cruel man, he was seized with a reverential fear, lest what he now heard might be a fact. He, therefore, returned with Jesus into the prætorium, and began, as it were, a new examination, asking him more strictly of his true origin.

To all his interrogations the suffering, bleeding victim for sin returned him no answer; at which Pilate seemed much displeased, and asked him, whether he was insensible of the power he had over him, and that he could either condemn him to death or release him: to this Jesus meekly replied, that he could have no power to hurt him, if he were not permitted by that, which rules in the heavens above; but, nevertheless, those who delivered him into his hands, were greater sinners, and more guilty than he; intimating, that both he and the chief priests were but the cruel instruments of fulfilling the will of God concerning him; and that their treatment of him, arising from an evil principle of infernal malice and envy, should be rewarded accordingly. Upon this answer, Pilate seems to have taken up the reso-

lution of setting him at liberty; therefore leaving Jesus behind him, he went out to inform the populace of it; but instead of appeasing, or dispersing them, which it ought to have done, they put an effectual check on his determination by crying out, if thou let this man go, thou art an enemy unto the emperor; for whosoever maketh himself a king in any province of the empire, is a declared enemy to his authority. This was like a thunderbolt to the timorous, trembling heart of the governor, and overcame all his firmness in favour of Jesus. It raised in him a fear quite contrary to the fear of God. Tiberius, his master, was particularly jealous of any pretenders to royalty, and Pilate being accused by the Jews, which in this case he certainly would, of favouring an accused impostor, must prove his utter ruin. Under apprehensions of this sort, he returned into the hall, and brought out Jesus in the same mock dress as before; and placing him before the people, he said to them, Behold your king. In the utmost indignation of him, they cried out; away with him, away with him, crucify him. To whom he said by way of irony, shall I crucify your king? They then declared they had no king but the Roman emperor.

As the the last scene before sentence, and thinking he had sufficiently acquitted himself, he called for water, and washing his hands before them all, as a sign of the purity of his intentions, he solemnly declared, that he was innocent in shedding the

blood of that just man; and that they must answer for it. To which they all made answer, let his blood be on us, and all our posterity. Now sentence of death was pronounced on Jesus, the most innocent, righteous, and holy man, that ever was, or ever can be found in the race of mankind. The Lamb of God appointed before, and set apart from the foundation of the world, is condemned to suffer the cursed, shameful, painful, excruciating death of a vile, atrocious slave: and in this most awful scene, has the mortification to see a most abandoned criminal, who richly deserved a public execution, called forth from prison and chains, to enjoy the sweets of liberty and life; for Pilate released Barabbas, when he condemned Jesus to the cross. But, in meek submission to the will of his Father, he endured all this without repining or once saying, that these wicked men did wrong in all, or in any of their actions in this tremendous hour and power of darkness, in which they seemed to triumph. But without further enlargement, let us go forward to the last thing in this most important passover; which is,

Fourthly, His death on Calvary. All he had endured in the city, was but preparatory to this. The propitiatory sacrifice was now to be led to the altar, where he should freely lay down his life a ransom for many. He had declared before to his opponents, I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it

again. And he had just told Pilate, that he could have no power at all against him, but as it was permitted him from heaven. He, therefore, voluntarily submitted himself to his enemies, in obedience to the will of his Father, and the demands of his just and righteous law.

Our blessed Redeemer being condemned to suffer the death of the cross, and abandoned by all, the officers and soldiers, after repeated indignities shown him, took the mock robe of state from his sacred and mangled body, and put his own garments on him; they then laid an heavy cross on his shoulders, lacerated and torn as they were, with the severe scourging which he underwent. Now, like Isaac, that eminent type of the incarnate, suffering Son of God, he bore, and carried the wood on which he was to be offered a sacrifice. In this solemn tragical procession, he must pass through some of the most public streets of the city, that he might suffer without the gate; as the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. His enemies now triumphed over him with great rejoicing: now they obtained the end they had laboured hard for, in opposition to the efforts and resolutions of the governor: now they gloried in having in their power, a person whom they both feared and hated: now, they might say, we shall put a final end to all his high pretensions. His disciples and friends were no less overwhelmed with

discouragement; their hopes in him were totally blasted; and, no doubt, they suffered from the ridicule of the populace. Notwithstanding, many of them followed him to the place of execution, especially women, whose tender affections could not behold their blessed Lord in such deplorable circumstances, without the highest grief and lamentations: they were absorbed in sorrow, and in tears, as they followed him.

Observing what floods of tears these pious women were pouring out on his account on each side of him, and particularly just behind him, he turned himself towards them, and said, with an audible voice, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves, and your children; for the time is very near when ye shall all say, Blessed are those barren wombs which never bore children, and those breasts which never gave suck. For the destruction of this city, and its wicked inhabitants shall be so dreadful, that they will begin to call upon the mountains, and the hills, to fall upon them to cover them from the just vengeance of God. For if the Romans thus cruelly treat me, who, as you know, am altogether innocent of what I am charged with, and condemned for, and therefore am but as a green tree, no way seasoned by sin for the punishment I endure. What will they not do to this guilty, heaven-daring people, when they are sent to revenge this day's cruelty to me upon them.

While the Son of God was carrying his cross, his sacred humanity, which, as Isaac or Sampson himself, had limits of strength or capacity, being exhausted through watchings, fasting, and waste of blood for so many hours, began to faint under its weight. Though as a divine person he was omnipotent, and not, as such, liable to weariness or fainting, yet his assumed human, created nature was necessarily subject to both. His conductors to the place of death, called Golgotha, apprehensive that he would expire under the weight of his burden, before he could ascend the hill, and consequently would be deprived of the accustomed booty of sharing his raiment among them, seized one Simon, a native of Cyrene, who had just come out of the country, and compelled him to carry his cross for him to the place; or, at least, to bear the heaviest end of it, on which the transverse beam was fixed, while Jesus carried the other, which, in comparison, was but light. However, the Son of Man, and the instrument of his death, arrived together at Golgotha, which signifies the place of a scull.

Calvary is a rocky hill on the west, or north-west of the city; a kind of charnel house, and the place of public execution. It is believed by many, that this was the same place to which Abraham brought Isaac to be offered; and some have said, that Adam, the father of mankind, was buried here; but on what authority I know not. His execu-

tioners gave him a mixture of vinegar and gall to drink, which was certainly an insult to his miseries, not being the usual composition given to malefactors to ease them of their torments, or to stupify their senses while they suffered; which consisted of wine and myrrh: but when he tasted it he refused to drink, as he did also the other when it was offered him. This circumstance also, was particularly marked by the spirit of prophecy, to point out the Son of God in his sufferings for sin.

Now they strip him of his garments, and lay him down, naked, on the fatal wood; they pierce his merciful hands, which were ever extended in charity to the needy; and his unwearied feet, which travelled in the beauties of holiness, over the mountains of Israel. They nailed him fast to the cross, and then lifted him up with it, to fix it in the earth; that he might there expire in agonies, and linger out many hours in the most exquisite pain. Now David's description of his Messiah was realized; in which he said, they pierced my hands and my feet. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man actually lifted up.

To make his death more notorious, and to pour the utmost contempt on all his high pretensions, they bring two criminals to the place of execution with him, to suffer death at the same time. They place him in the middle, setting one on the

right hand, and the other on the left, as if he had been the most noted transgressor of the three. But by this, they manifestly fulfilled what the royal, evangelic prophet Isaiah had predicted, that he was numbered with transgressors. It would seem, that these malefactors were hastened to their end sooner than they expected; and, perhaps, thinking themselves insulted, by suffering with such a character, railed at him, as the cause of hastening their death. It is probable, they might have been spared till after the solemnities of this feast, which was now only beginning, and should continue for the whole of the ensuing week. But such was the zeal of the rulers to finish their business with Jesus, that they hurried him forward, without loss of time, and durst not trust him in their securest cells, even over the approaching Sabbath; as in that case, the country people come, and crouding into the city, might render all they had done abortive, by taking him out of their hands, and preventing the execution of their sentence. Wherefore, to make short work in such an important matter, they push on their purpose to hang him on the accursed tree; and, to put him to greater shame, as well as to obscure his innocency, they lift him up between two thieves. They take him from prison, and from judgment, and number him with transgressors.*

* It is probable, after sentence, the officers might carry him directly to the prison where the two malefactors were, who were

Upon the top of the cross it was usual to signify the crime which occasioned this kind of death. Accordingly, Pilate appointed this inscription:—JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS; written in three of the most general languages; viz. the Hebrew, the Greek, and Latin; that the real cause of his sufferings might be known to all nations, as well as the Jews: that all strangers, which doubtless were very numerous, might take notice of his crime. The inscription contained a positive matter of fact, which his persecutors might have seen, had they not been ignorant of their own history, the prophecies, the genealogies, and life of the sufferer. He was the king of the Jews by divine appointment. Legally, as we have before proved, in the right of his adopted Father. Naturally, as the real descendant of David, by his blessed virgin mother. Hence it highly displeased the chief priests, who intreated him to alter it; and to say, that he had declared himself the king of the Jews. This alteration they imagined would throw the odium of his crucifixion on himself, as an assuming impostor. But as it stood, it might bear a reflection on them, as if

ordered to be executed with him, and might lodge him there during the time of getting them ready, which might be half an hour, more or less: the prophecy seems to lay a foundation for this conjecture; there is no hint given by any of the evangelists of any imprisonment strictly so called, but only that whilst he was in the hands of his enemies.

they had not sufficiently examined his title and pretensions to their government, and intimated a tacit condemnation of their conduct. But he told them, with some degree of resentment, that what he had written should not be altered.

It was near noon when our blessed Saviour was fixed to the cross, which time is particularly noticed by three of the evangelists, and according to the Jews' computation, was the sixth hour. Mark says, it was the third; which is to be understood of a different way of reckoning, according to their sacred order. Both the sacred and civil measure of time began at once; that is, at six in the morning, or in the evening. What we now call a day, consisting of twenty-four hours, beginning at midnight, was, by them, divided into two equal parts, of twelve hours each. The chief division beginning at our six in the evening. The sacred measure made the twelve natural hours into four canonical ones, consisting each of three, and were numbered the first, second, third, and fourth. From six to nine, was the first; from nine to twelve, the second; from twelve to three in the afternoon, the third; and from three to six, the fourth. The division of the night in the same manner was called watches, of which there were also four. Hence the first hour, being six in the morning in the civil reckoning, brings us, in the sixth, to our noon; and the third, in the sacred mentioned by Mark, to the same time, or about

twelve o'clock, when the third hour began. Thus the time when his crucifixion took place is particularly pointed out. He was apprehended in the garden, in the beginning of the third watch, the preceding night, when the moon was in her fullest splendor and glory: exactly twelve hours after, the Son of Man is lifted up, in excruciating pain, in the face of the burning sun, to die for the sins of men. But the glorious regent of the day, as if ashamed of the unparalleled cruelties of abandoned sinful creatures to his Creator; as if enraged at the enormity of their crimes; as if determined to punish his persecutors, by refusing to give countenance to, or even witnessing, the horror of their deeds; as if to sympathize with Emmanuel, and to mourn with him in his deepest sorrows; as if to call all nature, to which he administered life and joy, to take a part in the universal, general lamentation; began to withdraw his light and influence, and to put on the sable robe of sorrow, clothing the whole of his dependents in darkness and dismay.

Notwithstanding, nature began to feel alarmed on this most awful occasion; those hardened infernal hearts, who were the instruments of such hellish barbarity, felt no pangs of remorse, but rejoiced over their prey, and exulted in the reproaches with which they insulted his sacred character and divine ministry. In return for which, he compassionately and fervently prayed for them, saying, Father forgive them, they know not what they do.

His executioners, which were four in number, and common soldiers, as soon as they had performed their duty, began to divide his garments, cutting them into four parts, that each might have one: only his coat, or upper garment, being rather a curiosity, having no seam in it, and in good condition, they agreed among themselves to preserve it entire, and determined by lot whose it should be. These circumstances sufficiently notified the person of the Lord, and fulfilled the predictions of his death, with regard to the fate of his raiment, as the holy psalmist had foretold;—they parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture.

Now the chief priests and rulers, the profane multitude, the rude soldiers, yea, one of the malefactors, entertained him with reviling speeches, and provoking blasphemies. But the other having a right view of things, and sensible that they suffered justly, had the courage to reprove the infidelity of his fellow-sufferer, and to vindicate the innocency of Jesus; therefore, looking to him in a humble suppliant manner, he professed openly his faith in, and reliance on, him as the Son of God; and prayed, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Wonderful faith indeed! to apply for salvation to one seemingly forsaken of heaven and earth, suffering in the most shameful manner the most painful death. But such heroic confidence in the penitent dying thief met with

equal encouragement from the incarnate suffering Saviour; for he, in answer to his prayer, assured him, that he should be in heaven with him that very day. This is one of the most stupendous acts of mercy that ever was exhibited: the dying sacrifice for sin proves his authority over sin, death, and devils; whilst he suffers extremely from their envenomed malice, he manifests that he has power to make the subjects of his kingdom happy, in the very hour and agonies of dissolving nature. How does the supreme God display the riches, the liberality, and the omnipotence of his grace, in pardoning sin, and accepting the sinner, whilst his sacred humanity hangs on the accursed tree, itself a victim for transgression! He assaults death in his own territories! He takes the prey out of his teeth, and triumphs openly over it on the cross!

His mother, whose heart was now deeply pierced with many sorrows, according to good old Simeon's prediction, standing near him, he recommended her to John, his most faithful and beloved disciple; saying to her, woman, behold thy son; and to him, behold thy mother. Thus recommending them both to each other for the remaining part of their lives. Hence John took her to his own house, and they lived together as mother and son ever after.

The darkness now became general; the whole frame of nature was changed and out of order, for which no visible cause could be assigned: heathen

philosophers observed it, but could not account for it, as there could not be, at this time, a natural eclipse; hence it is recorded, that one cried out, that either God himself suffered, or sympathized with the sufferer. All this time the patient Lamb of God continued meekly languishing and consuming, as it were, in the flames of divine wrath. Every part of his body feeling the bitterness of those dregs of gross pollutions, which we observed in the cup given him to drink in Gethsemane. It was to him a cup of trembling indeed, which had occasioned him sweating great drops of blood falling down to the ground: and now was the occasion of these dismal, heart-rending, doleful words, Eloi! Eloi! lama sabacthani; which signify, my God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me. The human nature of Emmanuel, to which sin only could be imputed, was now, as it were, loaded or covered with it, which the most righteous and holy nature of God could not look upon: it was therefore for a space left to struggle and suffer, to burn and consume, by its own strength; a sense of divine consolation was now withdrawn; our high priest must feel the utmost effects of sin, and learn the afflictions of his people by heart-felt experience. This lamentation leads us to the zenith of his sorrow. Man had forsaken God; now God forsakes the man of his own right hand, when he is made an offering for sin. He cannot look on iniquity. He shall, therefore, pray and not be

heard, as in the garden; and at this time exclaim, as in terror and astonishment, in the darkness and distraction of his soul, under the heaviest sense of divine wrath. The horror occasioned by the sun forsaking the earth, in this hour of darkness, was faintly descriptive of what the holy and just One felt under the hidings of his Father's face. The blessed divinity withdrew the wonted joys from the suffering humanity, while it was bearing the curse. Hence the incarnate Saviour cried out, with a loud and dismal tone, my God! my God! When he was born, an heavenly light made the night replendent as the day; and saints and angels proclaimed their united joys. But when he dies, not an angel appears, and scarcely a disciple to be seen, to own him as a master. The day is turned into darkness, and his soul deserted of its wonted felicity, and suffer the terrors of hell.

Under such a complication of distress, it is no wonder if we find him in the agonies of an high fever; his moisture consumed, and his tongue cleaving to his mouth. He therefore cried out, I thirst. This and the former exclamation are equally descriptive of this divine person in these tragical circumstances which now environ him. The Holy Ghost had declared by David, that he should utter these words in his death; so that we see on the cross both the true Messiah, and the truth of the prophecies which describes his sufferings.

One of the company hearing him say I thirst,

took a sponge and dipped it vinegar, and putting it on the end of a reed, or long stalk of hysop, reached it up to his mouth, that he might drink and moisten his parched tongue. This completely fulfilled these words of the prophet concerning him:—in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Having tasted it, the blessed Jesus feeling the pangs of death upon him, cried with a loud and strong cry, IT IS FINISHED: adding, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit; and immediately bowing down his head expired. When he had completed his active life, in the celebration of the passover, and the institution of the sacrament: he said to his Father, in the first part of his last payer, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. His active obedience was then complete: nothing more was to be done in that way: the law was gloriously honoured and magnified; and the Father was highly glorified by the dutiful obedience of his incarnate Son. Now his passive obedience is also finished; this he proclaims in the most open, powerful, avowed manner, to a guilty sinful world; declaring, that all is minutely and exactly accomplished, according to the express prophecies, and figurative representations, which, from the beginning of time, had been made of his sufferings; so that his death finished the legal dispensation, and all its ceremonies; it finished the shedding of the blood of bulls, of sheep, and goats; it finished the use of sacrifices, established by Moses,

whether sanguinary or eucharistical: it finished all the apparatus of the temple; the vail of which, as the most symbolical thing of the whole, was, at this instant, rent from the top to the bottom, and perhaps in the presence of the officiating priest, who was now performing his duty in the holy place.

But above all, the cup which his Father had given him to drink was finished. This was so large and deep that it required more than human strength to carry it: the bitter ingredients with which it was filled, we observed in the garden, were sins of all kinds; sins of the soul and of the body, of the spirit and of the flesh. The dimensions of it may be surmised from the length of time it took in finishing its contents; he was above fifteen hours in emptying it, in all which time he had no cessation, not even so much as draw his breath (to speak after the manner of men) while he was drinking the deadly potion. But with it sin and sorrow are finished; finally, in the head now bowed on the cross; and shall be ultimately in all the members of his body, when they rise from the dead. The most tormenting curses of the law, which, like the bitter essence of wormwood, circulated from top to bottom of it, and the just vengeance of heaven, which, like fire, enflamed it, are now completely finished, and done away. All is finished that law and justice could demand. The debt is paid—now we may expect a discharge.

Before we leave the cross let us contemplate

this blessed departing soul, winging its speedy way, accompanied by those ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the author of eternal salvation, as he entered into his eternal sabbath of rest. Having now finished the great work of his new creation, by virtue of which the souls of men should be regenerated, and formed anew; he leaves the instrument of this work behind him, and hastens to paradise, the place of his glory and tranquillity. He joins the spirits of the just made perfect. O the high congratulations of this solemn meeting! the Father well pleased, embraces his returning Son; the heavenly choirs hymn forth his praises, and welcome him to his rest; the whole redeemed race break out into triumphant rejoicings—unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins by his own blood, be glory, dominion, blessing, and praise. But we must return.

CONCLUSION.

HIS INTERMENT AND RESURRECTION.

About three of the clock in the afternoon, he gave up the ghost which was attended with a most awful earthquake; as if nature herself was about to expire and breath her last: the adamantine rocks were rent asunder, and broken into pieces, as if they would avenge the death of him by whom they were formed, and destroy the authors of his

crucifixion: the dead rose, as if to reprove and condemn the living, and bear witness against the infernal barbarity of the cruel high-priests, scribes, and Pharisees: and as we before observed, the vail of the temple was rent by a divine power, to testify that the God of Israel abhorred the place, on account of the iniquitous practices of those who pretended to worship, and whose hands were now defiled with most precious innocent blood.

The total darkness which from noon had been till now general; the tremendous earthquake, and the rending of the rocks, which we may suppose was very violent on Calvary, roused the sleeping souls of the scoffing multitude: they began now to change their opinion of this sufferer, and to feel alarmed and confounded in themselves, fearing they should be swallowed up and destroyed, for the speeches they had blasphemously uttered against him; especially such as had been most actively guilty. They now began to disperse and fly for their lives, beating their breasts with horror, under a sense of the visible vengeance of God, so powerfully manifested against them, and in attestation of the innocence of him, whose sacred life they had now destroyed, and whose well-known doctrine and miracles, must now arise in their recollection, and operate as fuel to enflame their awakened consciences.

Particulary, the centurion and the soldiers who guarded Jesus, seeing all these wonderful demon-

strations of almighty power, declared, openly, that this man was, certainly, the Son of God. They could not resist the evidence of what they saw and heard; and therefore were forced, by the conviction of their own minds, to make this avowed confession; believing it utterly impossible that such prodigies would be made in the heavens, and in the earth, in favour of a merely human character.

It would seem, these rulers of the Jews, who had been the most forward in obtaining his condemnation and death, and who had so often asked him to prove his Messiahship by signs from heaven, paid no attention to these. Their unbelief hardened their hearts against conviction, supposing them only contingencies, which might have happened whether Jesus had suffered or not. Unconcerned, they went to the governor, and desired that the bodies hanging on the crosses, might be taken down that evening, before the Sabbath began; which, we may suppose, was not much above two hours distant, as it would begin at six, This high festival, which should continue for the week, they imagined, would be disgraced, if these objects were permitted to hang over the first day of it, which was the Sabbath.

Pilate granted their request, and gave orders to hasten the death of the malefactors, and to have their bodies removed. The soldiers, therefore, broke the legs of the two theives; but finding the blessed Jesus already dead, and that there was no necessity for further injury, did not break his legs:

but one of them, out of mere wantonness, thrust his spear into his side, from which flowed a large quantity of blood and water. This completed the great sacrifice, and pointed out the true lamb of God, and proved him to be our "Passover, sacrificed for us." It had been foretold, and typified of him through all the legal dispensation, that a bone of him should not be broken. And Zachariah the prophet, had particularly pointed out this circumstance, in which the penitent believer, through all the evangelical, should consider him with grief and sorrow; "They shall look on him whom they pierced and mourn."

Among the many disciples of our blessed Lord, there were some of the rulers: one of these an honourable counsellor, named Joseph, whose country residence was in the ancient city of Ramah, now called Arimathea, as soon as he saw that his divine Master was dead, went to Pilate, and requested his body to be delivered to him for interment. The governor hardly believing that he was dead so soon, sent for the centurion, to whom the execution of his sentence had been committed; and enquiring of him, whether he was certainly dead, received an answer in the affirmative. He expressed some surprise on the occasion, knowing, that this manner of death often continued as many days, as Jesus had been hours on the cross. However, he gave orders to deliver the body to this good and honourable man according to his desire. Being

of considerable opulence, as well as eminent piety, he possessed a garden at the bottom of the hill, in which he had erected a new tomb for himself and family's use; in which no corpse had ever yet been laid. Here we cannot help observing a wonderful providence indeed, that this just and good man, without intending any such thing, should prepare a place *free among the dead*, in which the body of the Son of God should be laid. He died so poor, that he had no burying-place of his own; yet he made his grave with the rich in his death, as the prophet had foretold concerning him.

Nicodemus the ruler, who visited him one evening in the first year of his ministry, and on his first public appearance in the holy city, now took courage and came boldly forward with Joseph, to own the remains of his divine Lord and Master: the weakness of his faith, and the fear of his brethren in the Sanhedrim prevented his openly acknowledging him in his life. But now without fear or shame, he takes an honourable part in his funeral; and these two great men join their riches and influence to honour his name, in the midst of such dismal disgrace.

Joseph bought a sufficient quantity of fine linen, in which to wrap the body; and Nicodemus, a large quantity, about an hundred weight, of aloes and myrrh and other spices to perfume it, according to the manner of the opulent among the Jews. Taking down the cross, it is not improbable, they carried

the body on it to the tomb; from which, when they had taken it, performed the operations necessary on the occasion.

When they had finished, they laid the sacred body in the proper place, and inclosed it with a large stone, fitted on purpose, as a door to the mouth of the sepulchre, which required many hands to remove it. Many women who were present at his death, also attended his funeral, and, no doubt, assisted at it, taking particular notice, both of the place, and the manner of his interment: wishing to manifest their respect for their dear Lord, as soon as the service was over, they went and bought new spices for further embalming his remains, immediately after the Sabbath was ended, which, we may suppose, was within an hour of commencing. These pious women (among whom was Mary Magdalene, that noted character for penitence) had quite forgot what he had said of his resurrection; and never expecting any such thing, were, nevertheless, ardently desirous of giving this testimony of regard, believing him to be a most eminent prophet, if not the Messiah.

Whilst his mourning disciples were busy in their preparations for laying him in the grave; his triumphant enemies went to the governor, and told him, that this impostor had delared in his life time, that he would rise again within three days; they, therefore, begged that he would command the sepulchre to be well guarded till the third day

was over; lest his disciples should come in the night, and take away the body, and give it out that he was risen from the dead; which would prove more pernicious than all they had done. It is very probable, they designed to have shown his body to the people at that time, both to justify what they had done in putting him to death, and to weaken the credit of all his doctrine and miracles.

Pilate told them, they might have a guard, and make the tomb as secure as they possibly could; they, therefore, took a sufficient number of soldiers to watch by it, and set their own public seal upon the stone. But all this precaution and diligent care, only served to make his resurrection more conspicuous, and to prove beyond all contradiction that he was no impostor, but the real Son of God.

It is of the utmost importance to the Christian cause to prove the resurrection of Christ; because, if he is not risen, he was, and must be, what his enemies said of him; and it was a duty incumbent on them to arraign and suppress impostors: but it was equally incumbent on the heads of the synagogue, to know the Messiah when he came, and submit, implicitly, to his divine government, in whatever shape or form it appeared. Now they, not knowing the Lord of glory, had crucified him; and had his blessed body a lifeless corpse, most securely sealed up in the heart of the earth, in the firmest part of it, the solid rock, in a new grave, where never before had been interment: sure, there was no need

of the living to watch the dead in such impregnable circumstances; scores of disciples could not soon, or easily have removed the strong barriers which inclosed the remains of their Master. Let the guards return, and go home to their repose; let as many disciples as choose come forward; where are the tools by which they mean to open his grave? Where are their hammers to break the rock in pieces, that they may take him away? And what profit will it be unto them when they have stolen him? It must be, methinks, either to make merchandise, or an idol of him: not the former, because the price would not be so high as that which Judas sold him for when living; and what would that small pittance be, divided amongst so many as must assist at this robbery? Not the latter, for the whole body of the disciples, and particularly the eleven apostles were abhorrent of idolatry. Beside, who must be the purchasers, and who the worshippers of this dead body? A public exhibition of it could answer no purpose, but to rouse the indignation of an insulted public, and manifest the infatuation of such a project, which would deservedly end in their ruin. But no such schemes could ever enter the minds of these honest, sincere, undesigning men. Their enemies need not be in such fear of them: they neither could, nor would, if in their power, remove the corpse from the place where they had laid it.

But nothing is more certain, than that the pre-

cautions taken to prevent a suppositious resurrection, were divinely ordered to prove the real one. They could not have taken more effectual measures to ascertain the truth of it. Their guard which they set to keep off the disciples, was appointed of God to watch the motions of the rising Redeemer. Their seal meant nothing, when the divine power removed the massive stone from the entrance of the sepulchre. When the hour arrives that he must rise, the earth shall cast him out, as Jonas was upon the dry ground; it therefore trembled as in agonies when he rose; this was the prophetic type, to which he referred so frequently in his ministry, and is now completely accomplished, after he had been three days in the heart of the earth.

He rose very early on the third day after his death and interment. This was noted in the Scriptures, as the apostle Paul particularly remarks. He was laid in the grave on the evening of the first day. He gave up the ghost about three in the afternoon; and was interred, as we have supposed, about five. The hour after, at six, the Sabbath began, he, as it were, was laid down to rest after all the labours of his six days work: this Sabbath, or seventh day, throughout the whole of it he rested; this was the second day. Early on the third (we may suppose the latest hour at three in the morning) he awoke as out of sleep, and resumed the life he had laid down: he took it again; and came forth, having the stone rolled away from his tomb by his angelic

attendants, after, at most, thirty-six hours from his expiring on the cross. Thus our blessed Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and so declared himself to be the Son of God by the most powerful, undeniable evidence. His greatest enemies were admitted to be the witnesses of it; and their strong precautions became clear illustrations of the truth of his predictions respecting his resurrection, when not a disciple was permitted to behold it, or was suffered to approach the sepulchre.

As soon as possible, the guard went to the high priest and rulers, and gave an account of all that happened at the sepulchre, and of the certain resurrection of Jesus. The Sanhedrim was immediately summoned to the council-chamber, to deliberate on this most important affair. They were reduced to the most wretched shift; and at last concluded to add lies to all their former blasphemies and cruelties: to stop the voice of truth with money, and by large rewards, engaged these watchmen to support their credit, and propagate, as far as they could, that his disciples stole him, and carried him away while they slept. This falsity they must maintain in the face of martial law, and in opposition to common sense. The sentinel placed on guard sleeps at the risk of his life; and on the supposition that they were all asleep, how could they know any thing of the matter; or say whether his disciples, or the vagabond

Jews, set on by the Scribes, had done it? However, they promised indemnity to the guards, if they would propagate this incredible story. But it was credited by wilful unbelievers many years after.

All circumstances considered, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is as clear as the bright appearance of the ruler of the day, when he rises to enlighten and enliven the hemisphere, where he shall shine to the highest perfection; and as well might the rulers of the synagogue have attempted to prevent the sun from rising and shining, as to hinder the resurrection of him, who is by office the Sun of Righteousness to a dark and miserable world.

Mary Magdalene, and a few others of her companions, came early to the sepulchre to anoint the body of the Lord with the aromatics which they had bought immediately after he was laid in the tomb. They were under great anxiety how to get the large stone removed from the entrance; but this did not prevent their going forward. When they arrived, they found the sepulchre open, and that the body of the Lord was not in it. Two angels told them, that he was risen, and invited them to examine the place where he had been laid: Mary unwilling to leave the place till she had obtained satisfaction what was become of him, he came up and made himself known to her, and ordered her to go and inform his disciples, and particularly Peter, that he was alive.

As soon as the news of his resurrection reached them, Peter and John came with all speed to the sepulchre, to assure themselves of the truth of it. John came first, and looking in waited for Peter, and they both went into the place, and had sufficient evidence that the body was neither stolen, nor removed by violence; for the linen in which he was interred, and particularly the napkin which was bound round his head, were carefully laid up, and the latter neatly folded, lying by itself.

The Lord of life appeared five times on the first day of his resurrection; first, to Mary Magdalene*; secondly, to the other women who had accompanied her to the sepulchre; thirdly, to Peter, either now, or at some other hour of the day; fourthly, to the two disciples at Emmaus; and, fifthly, to the company when they were assembled in the room. The apostle Thomas, called Didymus, was not present when the Lord showed himself to his assembled disciples; but coming in probably soon

* It would seem that Mary was not at the sepulchre when the Lord apeared to her, but having left her companions who were still before it, had withdrawn herself from them to some distant part of the garden to give vent to the sorrow of her heart, and the flood of tears which now overpowered her. Here she might more easily mistake him for the gardener, which she most certainly did. After he had assured her that he was risen, and indeed was the object whom she sought, he went to meet the other women who had left the sepulchre, and had set off according to the direction of the angels, to inform the disciples of his resurrection.

after Jesus had withdrawn, they told him they had seen him; that he had appeared to several at different times of the day; that he had been with them that evening, and eaten a part of what provisions they had to satisfy them; that he was really the same he was before his sufferings and death. Thomas told them, he could not believe that he was risen without more evident proof, and that nothing less would satisfy him than seeing with his own eyes the prints or scars of the nails that pierced his hands and his feet; and that he must examine, with his own hand, the wound in his side, before he could be persuaded that he was certainly alive. The small credit which he gave to the testimony of his brethren, of the resurrection of their common Lord and Master, was certainly blame-worthy; but his resolution to obtain the fullest confirmation of his faith is commendable: and this the compassionate Saviour most condescendingly afforded him at the next time of their assembling together; when he gave him a proof, not only of his resurrection, and the identity of his person, but that he was also the omniscient God, and the Searcher of hearts; at the same time giving him a gentle reproof for his unbelief: on which the apostle made a public confession of his faith, both of the resurrection and divinity of his Master.

This was the sixth time he appeared to his disciples; a seventh time was at the sea of Galilee. The Lord had appointed a general meeting

of his followers on one of the mountains of Galilee, when they should all have full evidence of his being alive, and that he was the same person they had seen and heard before he suffered. The apostles, in obedience to this appointment, left Jerusalem, and were arrived in their own native country, waiting the day of meeting. Seven of them agreed to go a fishing, by way of improving their time in a proper manner: Jesus met them here, and gave them an instructive lesson on the nature and effects of his Gospel in the world, which, like the net with which they were fishing, should enclose, and draw multitudes of souls out of sin and misery into salvation. This instructive miracle of a large draught of fishes was accompanied with another equally interesting to themselves; it carried a manifest proof that his care should supply their wants, while they were employed in gathering souls to him. Upon their landing, there was a fire made, fish broiling upon it, and bread prepared; all produced by the divine power of their Master. They sat down to eat, and to give them further assurance of the reality of his human nature; and that he was the same person who suffered, and was now alive; he both distributed the provisions, and eat with them. They were all fully satisfied that he was the Lord, and therefore could not make any enquiries who he was, whence he came, or what he intended.

When they had finished their repast, he ad-

dressed himself particularly to Peter, asking him whether he had that love for his person, and respect for his authority, that would induce him to leave his family, friends, and employment, to become his servant for life. Peter answered him, Lord, thou, who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee. He then said to him, feed my lambs; intimating, he must instruct the ignorant.

This question was put to Peter three different times; perhaps to remind him of the three times he denied his Lord; and to intimate, that his standing in the truth, and his usefulness in the world, depended not on himself, but on his Omnipotence. He then told him what difficulties and persecutions he should endure; and that he should suffer death for his sake. This zealous disciple had made greater professions of affection and attachment to his Lord than others of his brethren; and the first application of the question might have respect to that, as if he had asked him whether his professed love to him was more than his fellow disciples, as he had taken the lead in declaring, that though all men should forsake him yet would not he. How is it now Peter? Is your love and esteem of me greater than theirs? Lovest thou me more than any of these do? Presumptuous Peter being humbled and grieved with the threefold interrogation, modestly appealed to his omniscient Lord for the sincerity of his affection.

Soon after, our blessed Lord satisfied all the

doubts of his disciples respecting his resurrection. The meeting he had appointed for this purpose was fully attended; above five hundred assembled, who all saw him, and were satisfied that he was the same person they had seen before his death, of which many of them doubted until now. He assured them, that all power in heaven and in earth was committed to him; and by virtue of that authority which he had received, as man and mediator, he commissioned the eleven apostles, and commanded them to go through all the world, and make disciples of all nations, and preach the Gospel to every rational, immortal creature; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all his commandments and ordinances, in that manner in which he had instituted them; promising his divine presence should accompany his ministers, disciples, and services to the end of the world.

The design of the Son of God continuing on earth, so long after his resurrection, seems to be not only to give the fullest proof of this most important truth; but also to prepare his apostles for their future employment. Although this is the eighth time of his appearing on record, yet we may well suppose he had other interviews with his chosen servants, of which we have no account. The apostle Paul gives us the number of the assembly which saw him at one time in Galilee,

and tells us that he was seen of James on some particular occasion by himself; neither of which circumstances any of the evangelists have taken notice of; and why not other appearances as occasions might require. The time drew near however when he must take his final leave of them; he therefore ordered them, with some other friends, to repair to Jerusalem where he should meet them again.

They held their meetings in the usual place (we may suppose) privately. The last day of his abode on earth being come, he came among them, and particularly ordered them not to leave the holy city till they had received the promise which he had repeatedly given them of the Holy Ghost, who should invest them with supernatural gifts, and qualify them for their work in a few days. Their carnal minds still being under the influence of earthly affections, imagined that he was about to introduce a glorious temporal kingdom, asked him, whether he would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time or not? He told them it was improper for them to inquire into these things, which God had altogether in his own power, and which they could not, at present, comprehend: but after the Holy Ghost came, they should receive sufficient knowledge, and be enabled to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and over the whole earth.

After he had spent forty days on earth, he met

his disciples for the last time in their chamber in Jerusalem. He led them out to the mount of Olives, that they might be witnesses of his ascension, which was to take place that day. When they came near Bethany, which lay on the opposite side of the hill from the city, they made a stop, as if to spend some time in solemn religious worship: the Son of God engaged in solemn prayer with his disciples, for the last time on earth, and when he had lifted up his hands, and was pronouncing his parting blessing upon them, he lifted himself up from the ground in the midst of them, by an exertion of his divine power, and entered into a glorious, bright cloud, prepared for the occasion, on which he ascended triumphantly into heaven, to be crowned with glory and immortal honour at the right hand of the eternal Majesty. Here the Son of man is exalted to reign, and shall exercise his mediatorial power and authority to the end of time, when all his enemies shall be put under his feet.

That summit of the mount of Olives from which he ascended was about a mile and an half from Jerusalem; a very appropriate place for this glorious occasion. The ascension was the second degree of his exaltation, his resurrection being the first. Now he leaves Gethsemane, the garden of sorrows, beneath him; Calvary on the west, on which he died; the grave in which he lay; and the cruel city of Jerusalem, in which he was so

shamefully disgraced: he leaves them, I say, behind him, and triumphs visibly over all his enemies. All the priests, from the elevated situation of the temple, might have seen him taken up, if they had been honoured with any intimations of his acending on high that day: but as he rose from the dead, and lives for evermore, so he left the earth, and ascended to glory, honour, and majesty, leaving his disconsolate disciples to rejoice in his dignity, and lament their own loss.

The loss of his personal presence, however, was soon repaired by the coming of the Holy Ghost, which he had assured them of so frequently, and took place on that day week after. Thus the ancient prophecy concerning this great event was accomplished. Thou hast ascended on high—thou hast led captivity captive—thou hast received gifts for men—yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord who loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.

Part Third,

THE BLESSINGS OF IT EXHIBITED.

DISCOURSE I.

The blessed Effects of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension.

JESUS and the resurrection were the leading subjects of the apostle Paul's ministry. He had a special satisfaction in describing the divine person of his exalted Lord and Master; and had particular reasons for entertaining the high and honourable sentiments which he had received of him. Although in his ignorance, he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus; yet when he came to know him, he saw so much of his worth and excellence, that he left all to become his disciple. He was sensible of his divinity and dignity; that he was God in humanity; incarnate for the salvation of lost and ruined sinners; and must, therefore, suffer, and die, and rise again from the dead. When these things were opened and illustrated to him by that divine teacher who could both

enlarge his capacity, and fully illuminate his capacious mind, he instantly discovered the path of duty in which he must act; that, henceforward, he must devote his all to propagate the honours of Emmanuel; to prove the truth, and exhibit the blessings of his incarnation; demonstrate his death and resurrection to the universe; and that he shall judge all mankind at the termination of time.

It is not possible that the person of Jesus Christ can be too highly esteemed. It may be as well supposed, that a creature can think too honourably of its Creator, as that a redeemed soul could love its Redeemer with too ardent affection, or place too high confidence in him. The new creature, formed in Christ Jesus, is under infinitely greater obligations to love and honour him, than any that can arise from his mere existence as a creature. The great and important change in the relative and moral state of immortal beings, effected in consequence of his incarnation, lays them under the strongest obligations to love him supremely; yea to delight in him as the fountain of all felicity, and rejoice in him as the unchangeable source of all glory.

As a preliminary to the subject of this part, we propose to exhibit, as briefly as we can, the blessed effects of our Redeemer's resurrection and ascension to heaven. The chief thing to be considered here is,

THE ATONEMENT:

That is, the SATISFACTION which the Son of God hath given his Father, by his humiliation and sufferings. To illustrate this, we shall observe, first, That the atonement is complete, sufficiently proved by his resurrection and exaltation to the highest glory: second, The acceptance of it is manifested by the descent of the Holy Ghost: and, third, By the consequences of that descent, inspiring and impowering the apostles and disciples of Christ, both to do and suffer as their Lord had done. That the apostles and first Christians were under a supernatural influence cannot be denied. This came to pass, because the Son of God had promised it; therefore, the Spirit of God came upon them. And the reason of this was, because he had made a complete atonement by the sacrifice of himself.

The word which I have now fixed upon as a text, must be observed to be of the greatest importance to the cause of Christianity; it is that term, when applied to Christ, which intimates his personal divinity, and perfect work; for none but a divine person can make atonement for sin; and that what he has done for sinners, is perfect, both in nature and degree, is justly inferred from his divinity. The atonement, therefore, is a prominent article in the Christian creed; a foundation that supports the sacred edifice; it is laid upon the rock of ages, on which the church is built. It is the

chief glory and ornament of the plan of salvation; to which devils and carnal men manifest a particular aversion. But the foundation of God standeth sure; and other foundation can no man lay; because, Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

The signification of atonement is given us in other words, and may illustrate the blessed effects which flow from it. It is called a reconciliation; a ransom, and a satisfaction made for sin: each of which terms, when considered in relation to God and man, and particularly the God-man Christ Jesus, show us how full and complete it is. That he hath fully atoned for the offences of men; that by his benevolent interposition with his justly offended Father in their favour and behalf, he has effected that reconciliation which lays a solid foundation for every blessing. He hath ransomed them by paying the full price of their redemption; which was delivering his precious, sinless humanity to law and justice, to procure their liberty and justification. He therefore paid the GREAT RANSOM, to deliver them from the pit, from hell, and eternal ruin. When the soul of man was drawing near to the grave of endless death, and his life to everlasting destruction; then the Son of God became the Father's messenger to destroy sin and death. He was in this great, important work, the only interpreter of the divine counsels, showing unto man the uprightness of his laws, the justice of

his moral government, and the equity of those judicial proceedings which should overtake all his enemies. It is for the sake of this illustrious messenger, who is, as holy Job expresses it, an interpreter one among a thousand, that the grace of God is given to the sons of men; it is on account of the price he hath paid by his perfect obedience to all his Father's will, and his suffering death in the place of the guilty, that deliverance is proclaimed to those, who were by law delivered over to utter ruin. Now he hath ransomed them from the power of the grave; he hath redeemed them from death; he hath procured the release by the price of his own most precious blood; he hath swallowed up death in victory; and now shall wipe away the tears from off all faces. These are the expressions of the Holy Ghost by his holy prophets, respecting the atonement which we have received. Rom. v. 11.

But it is also called a satisfaction for sin; which intimates the fulness and perfection of it; for if it be not complete it cannot be satisfactory. We have heard the blessed Saviour proclaim on the cross with his expiring breath, "It is finished." Not only was his active and suffering life, and the various things connected with it, which have been before pointed out, fully terminated; but the great thing intended by the whole was now obtained; that is, complete satisfaction. If this was not the thing intended, the words do not seem to have any great importance. But when we see the atonement or,

full satisfaction made for sin, they have a meaning in them well worthy of a loud proclamation by the departing Son of God.

To set this interesting subject in a proper light before the Hebrews, seems to be a leading design of that epistle which Paul wrote to them. The apostle repeats frequently the offering and sacrifice of the body of Christ; and that it was the only offering which gave satisfaction to God. The blood, or soul of Christ, through the eternal Spirit was offered by himself to God: so Christ was once offered: the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all: this man offered one sacrifice for sins; for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified: now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The same divine writer hath said in another place, "Christ hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." A sweet-smelling savour intimates the highest satisfaction, and pleasure; and the Father hath declared, oftener than once, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." A testimony which distinguishes the satisfaction which the atonement of the Son gave to the Father above every other character; it is more than any thing that ever was said of Abraham the friend of God; his most faithful servant Moses; David, or the man after his own heart, or any other character on record.

The atonement of which we read in the Levitical law, which were both personal and national, might be brought forward here with propriety and advantage to the subject; but this has been already done in our illustration of the sacrifices, so that in this place we need not enlarge.

But the evidence connected with the resurrection and exaltation of our blessed Lord, in proof of the perfection of his atonement, we ought not to neglect. His resurrection is an undeniable living testimony to the truth of his doctrine; and that his pretentions to divinity were not groundless. It is a declaration made by the author of life, that he is no impostor; that the great design for which the Son of God became man was fully effected. It is a public, universal discharge to be proclaimed through heaven and earth; evidencing, that the debt incurred by penitent sinners of Adam's race is fully, and finally liquidated. It is a proof of the return of the good-will and favour of God to his rebellious and guilty creatures; because his justice is fully satisfied; his laws are particularly honoured; and his love and mercy illustriously magnified in this man.

If, as a divine person, it was not possible that he could be holden of death; yet certainly the release of his sacrificed body from the prison in which it was detained for a space, is proof to angels and men, that what this man did and suffered, was a sufficient and accepted atonement. He, therefore, rose from the dead to suffer and die no more; hence

his resurrection is distinguished by many remarkable circumstances, both of a providential and miraculous kind. All that ever were restored to life, either by the prophets or apostles, though effected by the same divine power, had not such evident demonstrations of it. He rose as the head of his body the church, which also, in consequence of the acceptance of his sacrifice, shall live together with him: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." The sentence of death is repealed; the curse of the law is cancelled; "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Through these Scriptures, and numbers more to the same effect, we see the complete atonement of the incarnate Son of God.

His ascension and exaltation illustrate this subject more fully, if possible. The ground of Emmanuel's acceptance and consequent glory in heaven, is the satisfaction he hath made for sinners. He could not have been received up into glory, if he had not first discharged the obligations which lay upon him: if one thing had been lacking, if there had been a thought, word, or action, in the whole course of his natural life, that the law could blame, justice would have kept him from ascending, and immaculate holiness would have shut the gates of heaven against him as an imperfect creature. But he ascends on high, in a stile peculiar to himself, suited to the perfection and dignity of his

character; a sufficient evidence that his works were complete, both in nature and degree. We are assured of two eminent translations and ascensions to heaven; the first in the antediluvian, and the second in the legal dispensation of divine grace. Here is a third at the very beginning of the evangelical, infinitely more glorious and dignified. This is the body of the risen Saviour, whose resurrection magnified the whole of his life on the other side of the grave; but now, his ascension is an additional glory to his resurrection; every step he takes in his journey to heaven impresses the marks of honour upon it.

The mighty Conqueror, and accepted Mediator, ascends till he arrives at the throne of the supreme eternal Majesty, and takes his seat at his Father's right-hand. This is a dignity, to which no other ever was, or ever shall be, exalted: it is a station too elevated for any mere creature; but not for him who is by nature God; nor for that man in whom all the fullness of the godhead dwells bodily. Here we have a full demonstration of his complete atonement. The brightest glory encircles his divine person; splendor and majesty environ him; the crown of supreme authority is set upon his head; the sceptre of universal dominion is put into his hand; he shall reign in righteousness over his subjects, and in justice, to the punishment and total overthrow of all his enemies. The immutable High Priest hath entered into the

most holy place, made without hands, with the merit of his most holy obedience, and presents his most perfect sacrifice, now alive from the dead, with his intercessions for men. This man is well qualified for the station he now fills; his qualifications are personally his own; they are not derived or improved by any foreign cause separate from himself; he is the author of his own excellencies, and by virtue of them the Father constitutes the Son to be the head over all things, and all persons in heaven and in earth. He is not only a king to rule and save, but also a priest to atone and sanctify; to the full exercise and effect of both which offices belongs his prophetic office, that by the application of this to the persons of men they may be made willing to serve him in the first place, and finally be qualified for eternal communion with him in a glorified state.

Secondly, By the descent of the Holy Ghost: the atonement of the Son of God is gloriously manifested by it; and particularly in applying, by his divine agency, the last-mentioned office of the exalted Redeemer. The benefits resulting from this are the first in order to the souls of men; they are preparatory to the full enjoyment of the regal and sacerdotal. But this is not the proper place to treat of them. Our attention here is called to that blessed effect of Christ's resurrection and ascension, in the descending of the Spirit of God as soon as he was sat down on the right-hand

of the Majesty on high, which is the clearest demonstration of the acceptance of his sacrifice.

Ascending or descending are words not properly applicable to divine operations, but they are figuratively applied to God, to intimate his condescension to human affairs, and particularly to the humiliation of the Son who descended; that is, took upon himself the human nature before he ascended as man: and it was in conformity to this descending of the Son that the Holy Ghost descended on him in a bodily shape on the day of his baptism. Now he confers more abundant honour on the same person, in his exalted and and glorified state, by descending in another form different from the former. In the former, he identified the person of the promised Messiah, or the Son of God in his incarnate state; and qualified him as man for the complete discharge of the work he was about to enter on: that being finished, and honourably accepted of, as answering all the purposes for which it was intended, he now descends, or comes down from heaven, the place of honour and glory, as the agent of the same divine person, to carry on and complete the purposes of his incarnation.

The blessed Jesus promised this divine agent to his apostles, just before his sufferings began, and distinguishes him by personal characters descriptive of his agency; which being altogether of a spiritual nature should guide their minds in all truth, particularly into the nature and design of all

they had heard from him. He calls him the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, whom the Father would send in continuance with his intercession. The Spirit of Truth, whom he should authorise to take his place, and infallibly lead them in every part of their testimony concerning him. The Comforter who should support them, not only in their public work, but with that inward consolation amidst all their sufferings for his sake, which arises from the inexpressible love of God, and the assurance of eternal blessedness with him in his exalted state. This divine person therefore descended according to these promises, and effectually supplied the place of the ascended and glorified Redeemer. His spiritual agency was of infinitely greater importance to them than the continual residence of their risen Master. Had he continued with them on earth their carnal minds would still have been occupied with their notions of a temporal kingdom. They might have long remained unacquainted with the nature and extent of those Scriptures which have respect to the spirituality of that economy which he came to establish. They must have gone on very awkwardly in their work, and must always have had recourse to his presence for direction, which must have greatly retarded their progress, as in this case he could not be in all places with them. But his exaltation, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost, at once stamps a dignity on his satis-

faction for men; opens the mystery of divine wisdom, hid from ages and generations; qualifies the servants of the Son of God for the great work of reforming the world, and bringing sinners to salvation; and removes every carnal, unworthy idea of the person and engagement of the true Messiah. It was therefore highly expedient that the Son of God should ascend, and the Spirit of God should descend.

On the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost we need not enlarge. But it may not be improper here, in a few words, to say that all the natural and moral perfections of the Deity are ascribed to him: the works which God only can do, he performs: he claims and receives the worship due to the eternal Supreme; and his invincible operation on the minds of men demonstrate his divine nature. We have the fullest illustration of this on the day of Pentecost, the week after our exalted Saviour ascended from the mount of Olives.

Our Lord had ordered his disciples not to depart from Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. The full meaning of this order they might not comprehend, but their obedience to it would soon explain it. Fifty days after the passover, at which they had seen their Master shed his blood, and on the eighth day, after they had witnessed his going up into heaven, they all met together for the purposes of divine worship in one place.

As they were engaged in their devotions, they were surprised by hearing a supernatural noise, which resembled an high rushing wind, and filled the house in which they were assembled; at the same time, the appearance of human tongues, divided into two parts, like a flame of fire, alighted on each of their heads; and immediately their minds were filled with a divine energy by the inspiring influence of the Holy Ghost. His divine Agency instantly taught them to speak the praises of the incarnate God in every different language throughout the world; and to teach every creature the extensive benefits of that wonderful act of divine compassion, and the efficacy of the complete atonement of Jesus Christ in their own dialect, or manner of speaking.

What must be the sensations of these happy souls on this important occasion! How must they conduct themselves from henceforward? Whither shall they go to begin the work they are now appointed to, and are qualified for? They must bear witness on earth to that which their beloved Master bears witness in heaven; and which his divine Spirit now gives them a full understanding of; that is, the sufficiency of his atoning sacrifice. This they must teach and preach to all nations and languages, as the GREAT BLESSING of all blessings. If they before received a commission, now they are furnished for the execution of it. Now they understand the nature of

their work, and feel not only that they are qualified for it, but see that they have an omnipotent infallible Agency, which shall be every where with them, and render all their operations effectual, and carry home to the souls of men the benefits of that sacrifice for sin, which is of such sweet-smelling savour in heaven. Their high notions of a temporal splendid monarchy were totally driven out of their thoughts. Their attention was wholly occupied on the ways and means of propagating the glory of the humiliation and exaltation of the eternally blessed Jesus, whose kingdom was not of this world, but of the spiritual, eternal, immortal world.

The divine fire, which was now kindled on the altar of their hearts, and had burnt up all their carnal imaginations, illuminated their way into the temple, or perhaps various public places of the city, where they began to proclaim the glorious atonement made by the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. The blessed apostles, and their companions, were thus fitted by the Holy Ghost to carry the risen, living Saviour into the wilderness of the people, by whose death and sacrifice their sins were carried into the land of oblivion, and should never be found again. This very day therefore they began to preach Jesus and the resurrection in various open places in Jerusalem, to the amazement of all men, and particularly of foreigners from many countries, who were come to cele-

brate this high festival. These strangers were astonished to hear Galilean Jews speak the native language of their countries, which they were certain they never could have acquired by common means.

This wonderful effect of the resurrection and ascension of the incarnate Son of God had been particularly stated by almost all the holy prophets who had foretold his incarnation. David speaks of it in many of his psalms, to which it will be sufficient only to refer for the present—Psalm xxii. 27. lxviii. 18; and lxxii throughout. Isaiah is also very copious on this subject—chap. xi and xii. Jeremiah describes this more at length than he does the cause of it—chap. xxxi. 31—35. Ezekiel's description of it is memorable—chap. xxxvi. 25. There are passages in all the minor prophets which will bear an evident application here, but we shall finish with the celebrated prophecy of Joel, which the apostle Peter assures us was descriptive of this day, and the glorious consequences of it. "And it shall come to pass afterward," that is, when the atonement is completed, "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit," chap. ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 16—22.

Thirdly, The consequences of this descent, or

as the prophecy describes it, the pouring out of the Spirit on these blessed men. Pouring out, anointing, baptizing, or washing are metaphorical expressions, when applied to the operations of God on the persons of men, and signify the effects of his divine power and mercy, when he vouchsafes to manifest them. Whatever exercises of this sort we meet with, whether they be public, belonging to the whole body of the church, or private, extending only to single families or persons*, when performed in obedience to a divine precept, illustrated the glorious operations of the Holy Ghost this day. He was given because Jesus was now glorified; and his influence should be in these in a most especial manner, guiding them through all the mazes of error into the paths of infallible, immortal truth, according to the doctrines of Christ, and him crucified. His presence should be always with them for direction and protection; and his divine consolations should be in them as a well of living water, to refresh them when weary, springing up into everlasting life; and consequently never should leave nor forsake them. Christ, the rock of ages, was smitten with the rod of justice; and from hence flows the fountain and streams of the waters of salvation; the benefits of of which these chosen companions of Emmanuel must open the way for, that they may run

* It is said proselytes of the gate were received into the Jewish church by baptism.

throughout the whole world. Happy world, where such blessings come!

The twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples, with the rest of their brethren, who enjoyed this high privilege, as men had no better claim to it than any other. They were, it is true, the attendants and followers of the divine Prophet, and always entertained the hopes that he should be the king of Israel. But did their behaviour to him entitle them to this superlative distinction, especially, when they all forsook him in his greatest extremity? Truly, no: it is to their Master's distinguishing kindness, and unlimited, unbounded affection they are indebted. The consideration of which, might fill them with holy indignation at their past ingratitude, and inspire them with zeal and courage in the work to which they were now appointed.

In whatever view we consider these men, we see them, indeed, very weak, earthen vessels, without consequence or authority in the world; without the advantages of what was then esteemed a liberal education; perhaps, not of the best moral character, previous to their acquaintance with Jesus: fishermen, and mechanics of different classes, quite common people in the walks of life. Yet these are the men on whom the Spirit of God is poured out: he anoints them as the sons of Aaron; baptizes them as it were with fire; and washes away all their imperfections, in that fountain of wisdom, power,

and love, which the whole life and death of the incarnate Son of God opened.

Here are evident marks of distinction put upon them; at least equivalent, if not superior to any that ever attended the most famous, ancient prophets: and it is not an individual, such as Moses, whose face shone with a bright effulgence, when he came down the second time from the holy mount; but we have here a whole assembly, an hundred and twenty sober, pious, sincere, undesigning men in the full exercise of reason, and all their mental powers, in the beginning of the day, instantly replenished and called out to preach the blessed effects of the resurrection and ascension of that man, who was so ignominiously put to death on Calvary.

See! how the divine energy operates upon their minds. The eyes of their understandings are clearly enlightened; they look into heaven, and see their divine Master in the highest glory; they look into the Scriptures, and see their accomplishment in him. Their judgments, under the guidance of him who taught the holy prophets, enables them to draw those fair, evident conclusions, which become a rule to their thoughts, conversations, and conduct. Their affections, under the influence of rational deduction, become strong and vigorous. The fears of suffering for the sake of their beloved, most blessed Lord and Master, and in defence of the truth of his doctrine, were wholly dissipated. Courage divine, now occupied their hearts;

clothed with the whole armour of God, they were ready for the warfare.

Looking into the world, and the state of mankind, their holy minds must be more deeply affected with a view of the sin and misery in which all lay than in any former period. They had not seen before, either the malady, which was reigning unto death, or the necessity of that antidote, which was only in the person and efficacious atonement of the Son of God. But on this day, they have a comprehensive discovery of both; hence, with ardent zeal in the face of all danger and of death itself, they preach repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

What motive different from that which induced the Son of God to take on him the human nature, could operate in their minds, and constrain them to forego every present enjoyment, and earthly comfort to encounter difficulties and dangers at the certain hazard of their lives? The love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, illuminated and influenced them; they were willing captives to the glorious cause into which he had led them. Being fully assured that it was the cause of God and truth, every thing must be sacrificed to support it, and no dangers evaded in promoting it; having, therefore, his example fully in view, they imitate and follow it as closely as possible; being fully assured of the design and efficacy of his incarnation, they explain and apply it to the utmost

of their power; considering his deep humiliation and consequent exaltation, they declare to the Jews first, and then to all the world, that Jesus Christ is the only true Messiah, and the promised Saviour of men. Seeing mankind led captive by the devil at his will, in opposition to the will of God, in his name, as well as by his authority, they attempt a release. This attempt brings upon them the opposition of all the powers of darkness.

We have seen the infernal powers exerting their influence in the hour of our Redeemer's disgrace; these, their emissaries, and cruel instruments, triumphed over him with much exultation. But now, in his cause, they have not an individual, but an host to contend with. When he was in their hands, and, particularly, in death on the cross, they might congratulate themselves on the certainty of having done with him; that they had put a final period to the man, and his measures. No, quite the reverse. A whole company comes forward at once, with authority and power similar to his own, and in his name does works equally great, as those which he performed himself. The number of his disciples increases to a great multitude; and not only speak as he taught them, and act according to his commands; but are also ready to suffer any extremity for his sake; accordingly, they were persecuted as he was, and numbers of them suffered death as he did, with the greatest cheerfulness and joy, which added additional honour to his death, but no effi-

cacy to the virtue of his atonement. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake.

They go forth to lay the foundation of that evangelical œconomy, or dispensation of divine grace, in which shall be exhibited all the blessings flowing from, or connected with the incarnation. The chief of which is, the all-sufficient and efficacious atonement, now accepted in heaven; and which must be published through all the earth. Each person engaged in this work, stands in need of supernatural strength, to enable him to remove the otherwise insuperable difficulties, which arise from the ignorance, passions, and prejudices of men. The gift of tongues might endow them with wisdom; by this, they were qualified to converse with all men, and to teach them in their own language; but if they wanted force of argument, or self-command, patient fortitude, in the midst of unnumbered personal insults; compassionate sympathy, towards the weaknesses, and afflictions of men; zeal and industry in their work, or fidelity to the trust reposed in them; the wisdom of tongues would have availed them little.

But each workman, wherever he goes, has as evident demonstrations of divine power attending him as Moses had, in bringing the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, and leading them forty years in the wilderness of Sinai; as Joshua, when he conquered and subdued the Canaanites; as

David, in all the victories which God gave him over his enemies.

It would be easy to carry on this contrast between these men of God, and the ancient prophets; to which, we might add the priesthood, and illustrate the divine power and agency, in the ministry of the holy apostles, as it appears more eminently conspicuous, than in any of the leaders, or supporters of the legal dispensation. But to conclude:

First, We may observe, that this agency of the Holy Ghost goes much further than the gift of tongues, or the power of working miracles; these are but the outworks which defend the city of God. They were, indeed, necessary at the beginning of the Gospel, to demonstrate to mankind, that God Almighty was the author of those doctrines it contained, as well as of these evidences by which it is illustrated. We are not allowed to rest the proof of any doctrine on the evidence of any single, or even repeated miracles; for there are lying wonders as well as true; and of lies, the true God cannot be the author. Therefore the doctrine must be examined more strictly, than the miracle that accompanies it, whether what is spoken in the name of God, be worthy of his divine nature and perfections. If it is not, the miracle is a deception, which, by the devices of satan, imposes on the feeble senses.

But the Holy Spirit of God, carries on his operations to the sanctifying of the soul, or the puri-

fying of the heart. This is applying the precious, all-sufficient atonement of the incarnate Saviour, which was more necessary to the salvation of the apostles themselves, than all their miraculous powers; and extends to all the redeemed without exception, in every age and generation, as well as to these highly honoured, and supernaturally gifted men.

Second, We may see, also, that the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, was to glorify the person of Christ, to magnify his doctrine, and to qualify his apostles, and servants, for propagating it in the most extensive manner. Without him they could have done nothing; no human powers were adequate to the important service of turning men from the devil to Christ; the wisdom of men was totally insufficient to investigate the nature, and tendency of those divine sentiments which the Son of God inculcated. Under a sense of these things, the great apostle of the Gentiles exclaims, who is sufficient for these things! But considering in whose name, authority and influence he acted, he declares, our sufficiency is of God. God the Spirit descended, when God the Son in his humanity ascended; and, under his infallible direction, they exhibit to mankind, the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the superlative joys of the Holy Ghost; all shining forth, and gloriously manifested by the complete atonement of Jesus Christ.

DISCOURSE II.

Evangelical Institutions.

THE sufficiency of the sacrifice of the Son of God is undeniably manifest from the divinity and dignity of his person. It is fully attested by the descent, agency, and operations of the Holy Ghost; and gloriously illustrated in the ministry, and by the sufferings of those inspired holy men who were sent to publish it. Our last discourse exhibits the blessed effects of his resurrection and ascension, as they are the grand cause, or perhaps, more properly, the means of displaying and exhibiting to heaven and earth the great reason of all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings to men. This we have seen in the atonement of Jesus Christ, which is the soul, that puts life and energy into the whole body of divinity. For as the body without the soul, is dead, so that system of doctrine, which sets aside the vicarious satisfaction of the incarnate Son of God, is a lifeless carcase, however decorated and ornamental it may appear. This is that article which runs through the whole Gospel, and every evangelical institution supports it.

Before we proceed further, it may be proper to state the plan of this third part of our work, which

is to exhibit the blessings of the incarnation. On a view of the prospect before us, how deeply, how solemnly, ought our minds to be affected! the love, the mercy, and the goodness of God, stand full before us; all the benefits that sinners do, or can, enjoy, flow from the Father through the atonement of the Son, by the agency of the Holy Ghost. What tongue can describe, what hand hold forth, or what means unfold, the unsearchable riches of grace? But let us consider, and attentively meditate, on such as are exhibited.

First, By the Gospel.

Secondly, By the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, By Death.

Fourthly, By the Glorified.

Each of these contain matter amply sufficient for a separate volume. But we propose only an illustration of such leading particulars as come within the limits of our design. In the first, we have that system of divine truth which makes believers wise unto salvation: in the second, the application and use of this system: in the third, the happy fruits and effects of it: in the fourth, the eternal and unspeakable joys to which the whole is preparative: all arising from, and most intimately connected with, the manifestation of the Son of God.

FIRST, THE GOSPEL.

1. The blessings exhibited by the Gospel, lead

us to consider, in the first place, those evangelical institutions which support its doctrines. These are indispensably necessary to the promotion and success of all that scheme of truth which infinite wisdom hath formed, and was propagated in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The Gospel must be dispensed by officers divinely appointed. They receive their orders from heaven after what manner they shall set and furnish that table, on which the provisions of souls shall be placed. They are the stewards of the manifold grace of God, and are to set in order, and establish all things according to his will. They are the ministering servants of the living God, who have no authority of themselves to institute the smallest matter. They do every thing according to the pattern shown them; and it is such as is worthy of the spiritual, pure, holy, and divine mind which hath formed it. The frame of the Gospel surpasses, very far surpasses, the tabernacle which Moses set up, or the temple which Solomon built.

In this we have the covenant of grace opened, the most glorious dispensation of the mercy of God: here is the fountain for sin and uncleanness: the tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not man: the temple built on the rock of ages, the wonderful work of the man whose name is the branch: the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth: that plan of divine contrivance for the happiness of wretched and miserable

creatures, which infinitely surpasses the conception of all created beings.

The grace and mercy of God, given to mankind in Christ before the world began, was dispensed to the church by the patriarchs, from the beginning of the world to the time of Moses. This dispensation was very narrow and limited; but it was sufficiently adapted to the then state of things. Throughout the whole of it the Gospel was preached, by means of the Revelations gradually given them concerning the person and incarnation of the promised seed. This infant dispensation gave place to that instituted by Moses, in which we see much of the divine majesty, justice, and holiness; much of the wisdom, compassion, and forbearance of God. But that also gives place to this dispensation, which is infinitely more glorious in its nature, uses, and ends, and shall stand till time itself be dissolved. Here we have a display of all the endearing, sweet, and delightful perfections of Deity: his affections to poor miserable wretched objects are gloriously exhibited. His love, pity, and lowliness, stand forward here in the most engaging persuasive manner: hence the inspired apostle Paul, when making a comparison between the legal and evangelical dispensations, seems as if he wanted words to express the superior glory of the latter; and he expressly says, that the former had no glory in comparison. "For even that which was made glorious, had no glory

in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." The legal dispensation, divinely glorious as it appeared to be, in all the external pomp and majesty with which it was introduced at Mount Sinai, loses all its lustre, and fades away like the decaying moon before the superior light of the day: the promulgation of the law from Mount Zion, or the establishing of the evangelical dispensation, was incomparably more glorious; the one was typical and figurative of the other: hence, as the substance is superior to the shadow, so are the institutions of the Gospel to those of the law. For the law maketh nothing perfect; that is, the law of Moses had no perfection in it, so as to entitle it to everlasting duration, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. This better hope, is that dispensation of the unspeakable grace of God, which was the object of the hope of all the people of God from the beginning of the world, particularly under the intolerable heavy yoke of ceremonies. All the institutions of that law were burdensome, galling, and insupportable. But the evangelical are light, easy, and pleasant: they are the means by which we draw nigh to God; the walls of the consecrated court in which we worship him; the pillars or the frame of that table on which the covenant of grace, and all the blessings of it, are opened and laid out

If we again look into the holy place of the

temple, we shall find a bright illustration of the necessity indeed, as well as of the usefulness of the evangelical institutions we speak of.

Let us notice the golden candlestick; the table of shew-bread; and the altar of incense. There was a necessity for these in the typical house of God, to support the golden lamps; the flaming oil; the twelve loaves of shew-bread; and the burning incense in the golden cup, or censer, which was twice every day set upon it. It was indecorous to the divine authority, and highly unsuitable to the divine Majesty, to set the golden lamps, containing the sacred oil, upon the earth without a candlestick, much more to lay the twelve consecrated loaves on the floor of the holy place; and most of all, to burn the heavenly perfume which had so much of a spiritual signification in it on the naked ground, or even the polished rock on which the temple stood. Hence such particular orders are given respecting the form, consecration, and establishment of these moveable institutions. We might go on, and take notice of all the inferior utensils which belonged to these principal pieces of furniture, which were placed in the sanctuary. But we leave them, and return to the evangelical institutions which these may illustrate, and to which, we may believe, they had a particular regard, as representations of better things to come.

In the spiritual and more glorious dispensation

of the Gospel, we have the institutions of prayer, preaching, and praise; each of which services are so necessary in the evangelical house of God, that the purposes of divine mercy, and indeed the blessed fruits of the incarnation can hardly be promoted without them. These exercises are appointed by divine authority, and supported by divine example, in a style infinitely more perfect than any thing of the kind to be seen in the old establishment. It is true they were not neglected in that, nor in any age or dispensation has the church been without the spirit of grace and supplication; and that these were always duties incumbent on the people of God, the laws of nature intimate: but the doctrines of the Gospel illustrate the indispensable necessity of them as soon as they are propagated; and it is peculiar to it to establish these, that, by the first, the lamp of divine truth and grace may be supported in the world, and in the hearts and lives of the people of God: by the second, the bread from heaven, that is the person and atonement of the Son of God, may be held up to perishing, miserable, penitent men; and that in a constant, daily, and weekly succession: by the third, the pious, thankful expression of gratitude may ascend up continually, like the morning and evening incense from the altar of the renewed heart, to God, by the hand of the divine Mediator.

2. The ministers of the evangelical dispensation. The first, the great minister here is the

blessed, glorified Jesus. He is in truth the minister of the true sanctuary; the spiritual temple; in which he exercises his divine authority, and sacred offices. Notwithstanding his holy human nature is now exalted to the highest dignity in heaven, yet he ministers, by the agency of his Spirit, in his church on earth; performing the services incumbent on him as a prophet, priest, and king. He is a prophet on earth, a priest in heaven, and a sovereign in both. He hath obtained a more excellent ministry than Moses, Aaron, or David. These, we may observe, were ministers of his, and represented him before his incarnation: but now that he is the visible, universal Head over all things to his church. He calls and commissions apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the edifying or building up of his body.

The first were selected and appointed by himself to the first stations in the ministry; they stood next to him in authority, and were supernaturally fitted to execute the office they were called to; the name he gave them intimated the commission with which he honoured them. It signifies persons sent on any special message. Christ is called the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, because he was sent of God the Father, to take upon him the human nature, to work out our salvation, and be our mediator: so the apostles were men sent by the blessed Saviour, and are called ambassadors for God. They were instituted with

full powers to preach peace between God and man; they, therefore, go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature. They are sent to offer salvation to the whole lost and miserable race of Adam. The twelve apostles, like the twelve patriarchs, lay the foundation of a dispensation, which God will more abundantly honour.

Evangelists were assistants to the apostles; next to them in office, and acted under the same authority with them, and by their direction. Their name also arose from their office, which was preaching the Gospel. They were carriers of the good news which the incarnate Son of God brought from heaven. With what force of argument, and lively zeal, would these divine messengers preach Christ, to the fallen, depraved, and wretched sons of men.

Pastors are the stated ministers, who have the charge and oversight of a particular body of people, to instruct, teach, or feed them for Christ, the great, the good, the chief Shepherd. If the blessed apostles were sent to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prison doors for the emancipation of those who were bound; if the holy evangelists were to incorporate, and unite these in one community, and to appoint elders over them in every city, it was also the office of these elders to feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood, and to take the charge and oversight of them with a ready mind. It was the

business of these pastors to inspect the flock; to minister in word or doctrine; to administer sacraments; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort; to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the particular congregation over which they were appointed by the apostles and evangelists. By whatever characters these stated officers of the New Testament dispensation are distinguished, they are certainly established for the same end. Whether they be called pastors, presbyters, bishops, or elders, their work is the same, and ordained for the benefit and salvation of the body of Christ, which is his church.

To these it is necessary there should be ministers of an inferior order, who may be assistants in the sacred sanctuary to the pastoral. These are teachers and deacons. The first may be what was anciently called catechists, who taught the first principles of the doctrines of Christ to ignorant converts, or the youth belonging to the congregation. The second, such as were appointed to superintend the temporalities of the church, serve tables, assist the distressed, &c. under the direction of the established pastors. These were the evangelical Nethenims, whose institution and services were equally necessary in the church of Christ, as the hewers of wood and drawers of water in the legal œconomy.

The apostolic, and evangelic ministry, was peculiarly honoured with supernatural qualifications;

and highly necessary in laying the foundation of the Gospel dispensation. When this was sufficiently established, it seemed good to the Head of the Church to withdraw them, and to maintain his doctrine and discipline by the means of a regular and pastoral ministry, under the blessed agency of the Holy Ghost. Hence, though there has been no succession of apostles and evangelists, properly so called, endowed with the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles, as the first age of Christianity was blessed with; notwithstanding, there has been, and always, to the end of the world, will be a constant propagation, and practical improvement of that system of divine truth, which they received from God, and so successfully established among men. The Holy Ghost, therefore, maintains the existence and the honours of the doctrines of the incarnate Saviour; by raising up men of capacity, and qualifying them with his sanctifying grace and influence in every age, and in every place. These fit men have been, from the beginning of the Gospel, a regular and standing order, which shall not fail till time expires. But I shall close this in the words of an able, pious writer.

"Were not the priests under the law emblems of Gospel ministers? They must be divinely called to their work, and qualified with gifts and grace for it, richly furnished with spiritual knowledge, and be blameless, sober, holy, and prudent, wholly given to their work, not intangling themselves with

the deadening affairs of this life, nor joining in marriage with impious and infamous women, nor in fellowship with whorish, antichristian churches. Always applying to themselves the blood and spirit of Jesus, they must preach the great atonement, and devote themselves and hearers to God; and every new Sabbath exhibit Jesus on the Gospel table, as the shew-bread of life; daily offer the incense of fervent prayers; blow the Gospel trumpet, calling and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God; sounding alarms of impending danger, and exciting to make war with sin, satan, and the world. It is theirs to explain the oracles of God; to snuff off erroneous glosses; and to cast out noisome professors. It is theirs to bless their people, solve their doubts, purge and restore the scandalous; equally caring for the true happiness of the poor as of the rich; and according to their faithfulness and diligence, ought to be their encouragement from their people, and shall be their everlasting reward*."

3. Baptism, and the Lord's supper. The institution of these meet us here: they are the blessed ordinances which exhibit the person and benefits of the incarnate divinity, in the most explicit manner. By the first, we see the indispensable necessity of purity of heart, and the beauty of that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. It shows HIM, who fulfilled all righteousness in

* Brown in ver. priest.

his own person, and for our sakes; whose baptism with blood (Luke xii. 50) makes the fountain of justification, sanctification, and all spiritual comfort. It is the door by which the weary, wandering creature enters into the house of God; the anti-chamber in which the true believer puts off the filthy, rotton rags of his own righteousnes, which he hath worn from his infancy, and puts on the garments of salvation, that he may be qualified to appear with acceptance before God. It is the introductory, initiating, qualifying ordinance, which distinguishes the professed disciples of Jesus from unbelievers; it introduces them to all the blessings of the incarnation; initiates them into the family of God and the household of faith; qualifies them to witness a good confession, and to suffer for the Redeemer's glory. Hence, that element which is of such universal benefit to mankind, is divinely appointed to be applied to the body, in the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the soul, as an outward symbol of all this inward and spiritual grace. It is also a seal affixed to the deed of gift, by which the Son of God bequeaths the eternal inheritance to all who are baptized by the Holy Ghost, with the waters of the wells of salvation, or of the river of life, which runs through the city of God.

By the second, we look upon the divine person, and are reminded of his amazing sorrows. In this institution what compssion and love are manifested

to those happy souls, who enjoy the blessing as well as the sign of baptism. Ministers can but baptize the body, by which the professing members are entitled to the blessed privilege of this ordinance; but the Holy Spirit baptizes the soul, and qualifies it for the proper use and improvement of it.

How necessary is this ordinance in the house of God! How full of instruction the elements devoted to represent the broken body and streaming blood of HIM, by whom we have received the atonement! It is the spiritual signification of the bread and wine, which the believer, by faith, must contemplate; it is the divine nature in the human which is here exhibited. The soul sees, by faith, all the unspeakable, glorious perfections of God illustriously magnified in the person of its Redeemer. His rich, free, unmerited, invincible love appears here in all its overflowing, powerful effects: the poor, unworthy, pardoned, accepted creature may well be ashamed to see itself set among the princes of glory, clothed in the best robe of heaven, the righteousness of the Son of God. Here he sees, he tastes the bread of heaven; he partakes of the celestial wine, which grew in the heavenly paradise. This provision is well suited to his state and circumstances; it is lowered to his capacity and appetite; it is nourishing food which delights his heart.

Hence the great propriety of a frequent repetition of this feast. Baptism is but once to be ad-

ministered, because it is a solemn engagement, like an oath, on admission to be the Lord's, to serve him for ever. But many reasons may be assigned why this ordinance must be frequent. These arise from our constant necessities; the personal glories and fulness of Christ; and from the institution itself. It is in this we have, *in narrow view*, the sum and substance of religion; a delineation of eternal truth, which cannot be too often exhibited. The glorious effects of a death, which destroys the cause and the author of death: procures life and happiness immortal; fills the Gospel with every promise, and every promise with the love of God; these can never be too frequently called to remembrance: our returning necessities of all kinds; I mean such as arise from our little faith, languid hope, cold affections to our best interests, &c. &c. require a frequent supply, and where can we receive means for the renewing of our strength, but where they are appointed? and this blessed institution is appointed for this end, therefore must often be used. See the force of these words, *do this in remembrance of me*. The love of Christ constrains the Christian to remember him: he finds it not only his duty, but his interest to obey his dying command.

It may not be improper to observe further, that these institutions in this Christian dispensation supply the place of circumcision, and the passover in the Jewish. All the males of Abraham's de-

scendants were to be circumcised in their infancy; and then were entitled to eat the passover; so infant converts to Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, they and their offspring became entitled to all the privileges of the Gospel, when they, by baptism, were separated from the rest of mankind, and made an open profession of their faith in Christ. That the children of believing parents have a right to baptism, is inferred from the circumcision of Jewish children; who on the eighth day were made members of the visible church, and were certainly taken into the covenant of God, which he graciously made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This covenant is superceded by the Gospel, which is infinitely superior to it. And shall the children of believers be less privileged than the children of Israel! Has the Father of mercies less regard for the seed of the servants of his incarnate Son, than the seed of a chosen friend!

But the Lord's supper certainly is established in the place of the passover. We have seen the author of all divine institutions, both in the legal and evangelical dispensations, in the same hour, annulling the authority of the latter, and transferring it to the former, with particular marks of superiority and dignity.

This sacred institution is purely evangelical; there is more of the nature, design, and end of the blessed Gospel in it, than in any other. This has more spirituality, divine glory, and heavenly benignity

than all preceding institutions. They all seem to look to this for their fulness and virtue: they point hither, and direct to it, as if they were imperfect without it, The Lord's supper is that divine entertainment, or spiritual feast, to which the ministry of the word, and baptism with water are only preparative. These, too, were ordinances in the carnal dispensation. The first may be considered, as stated, and constantly exercised by the priests and prophets; the second as occasional, having respect to the holiness of that dark œconomy, in which circumcision and the passover were the principal institutions. But this, of which we speak, is pure without the blood implied in cutting off the foreskin of the flesh; and spiritual without the roasted limbs of a paschal lamb.

It is also a seal of the covenant of grace; assuring worthy communicants of all the blessings it contains, and which are comprised in these two glorious, expressive words—grace and glory.

These seals affixed to the Gospel dispensation, by the hand of the incarnate God himself, just before he laid down his life for us, give the utmost certainty to all the true members of his church, that they shall enjoy, in the fullest extent, all the benefits and felicity of that state, which are revealed by him, and promised to them, when time and all its sorrowful concomitants are no more. With what lively faith, and strong hope then should believers use and improve them! How humble, thankful,

and joyful should they be. How cheerful and happy may we be on earth, who have such pledges of the unspeakable, never-fading glories of heaven.

4. We ought also to take notice of the TIME, which is instituted for exhibiting these blessings of which we are about to speak. This is no less needful of a divine regulation, than the services of the evangelic sanctuary of an establishment. The Sabbath was a divine ordinance to the ancient people of God; a day of rest, in which they were not permitted to do any servile work. The God of Israel appointed the seventh day for the purposes of his own worship, and severely punished those who were disobedient to his command. The dedication of the seventh part of time to the service and honour of the Creator, commenced as soon as the creation was finished: hence it is an institution founded in the nature of things. Adam was directed to worship and adore his Creator in his pure and sinless state; and it would seem, the first day of his existence was a Sabbath. He was created the last of all creatures on the sixth; hence the first complete day of his life was the seventh, which God blessed and sanctified; because, that in it he had rested from all his work, which God had created and made.

With what particular solemnity did the Lord of the Sabbath institute the time of his public worship, and all the services of the seventh day, when he delivered the moral law from mount Sinai?

It is made sacred to every rational creature. The rising generation must be trained up in a holy reverence of it; servants and labourers of every description must lay by their tools and instruments through all the hours of this sacred season. The beasts themselves must rest in honour of it; and for this express reason, because the Lord sanctified the seventh day to be an holy Sabbath to himself; that all the labours of this life being suspended, the immortal soul may have no interruption in waiting upon God; that the mind, being free from worldly cares, may wholly employ itself in contemplating the divine nature and perfections, the world to come, the blessedness of immortality, and all the great subjects of divine revelation; particularly the amazing love and condescension of the incarnate God. Hence it is not only founded in the nature of things, but also supported by the purest principles of morality. See more of this in my dissertation on the duties of the Lord's day. State of Reli. pa. 174—179.

This sacred time receives a greater degree of sanctity, if possible, from the person and incarnation of the Lord Jesus. In the whole course of his humble nativity, he paid the strictest attention to the duties of it, and warmly reproved the supercilious abuses of the Scribes and Pharisees, who seemed rather to worship the time than the institutor and Lord of it. He asserted in his ministry, that as the Son of Man, he was the Lord of the Sabbath; and

he proved what he asserted in his resurrection; for he rose again on the first day of the week, which ever since is the Christian Sabbath.

Hence the seventh part of time becomes an evangelical institution; it is consecrated to the glory of God our Saviour for the purposes of propagating and establishing his Gospel, for promoting the design, and exhibiting the infinite blessings of his incarnation; every part of it is most precious, and ought to be most devoutly improved. It may be called the sanctifier of all time, both as it is set apart for the most holy and heavenly exercises; and also as we are taught how to improve all the other parts of time to the glory of God, in the performance of every relative moral duty.

If the first institution of the Sabbath-day, which, we have said, is founded in the nature of things, intimated to mankind the obligations which every rational creature is under to worship the Creator: if the establishment of it in the moral law, laid the church of God under special obligations to observe and keep it, how much more strong, and forcible reasons have we, who, by the Gospel, see not only the necessity of this institution from the beginning of the world, but also the unspeakable mercy of God in humanity, consecrating the eighth day from the creation, to be the stated time for the assembling and services of his people. This was the day he rose from the dead in the most early part of it; it became the Lord's day: in it he assembled with

the congregation of his disciples, whilst he remained on earth: when he ascended it was on the same holy day; and the next day of the Lord, after he was received up into heaven, the Holy Ghost descended, as we have before seen.

Here see the divine will manifested in legible characters, respecting the time when the redeemed of the Lord shall worship their Redeemer. We shall now close this discourse with a few practical observations.

1. Such as are sensible of the necessity and utility of these, and every divine institution of the Gospel, will receive and honour them accordingly. They are evidently not of human, but divine appointment; therefore it is every man's duty to embrace and use them. Ministers are but men, of the same nature, and subject to the same infirmities as other men; but when it evidently appears, that they are raised up, and sent of God, their office and character demand the attention and reverence of every man: accordingly, our exalted Redeemer has declared concerning them in general, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and him that sent me; and he that offendeth one of these little ones it were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea."

The spiritual gifts which were so abundant in the establishing of these evangelical services, were given the apostles and their brethren by the

Holy Spirit of Jesus: the Spirit of Christ was in them more fully, than in any of the holy prophets. The Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, enriched them with diversities of gifts, according to the administrations in which they were to officiate in the church: first apostles, to lay the foundation, who were strong, able, penetrating, courageous men; secondarily prophets, qualified to explain and apply past prophecies, and to deliver revelations of future times; evangelists, lively, fervent, diligent preachers, whose eyes must always be fixed on the divine object of their ministry, the Son of God in human nature: teachers of different capacities, and different stations; pastors to watch over and feed the flock, stated in their various departments for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all. For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit. Cor. I xii. Eph. iv. 11.

2. If the ministers of Christ be entitled to high esteem for their work's sake, and for the rich qualifications with which they are replenished, how worthy of all acceptation are those instituted means

by which we are admitted into the house of God, and are introduced into the blessed, glorious, and happy presence of God and angels? We have here, as it were, the ladder let down from heaven, till it reaches and rests on the earth; on which the believer may climb, and ascend to heaven: every part of these evangelical institutions, of which we have been speaking, is like a step by which the ascent is made.

If evangelical pastors may be compared to the strong and powerful horses in Pharaoh's chariot, then may the institutions of the Gospel be compared to the chariot itself. Or, this royal piece of furniture may illustrate these heavenly ordinances, in which the King of Glory, and his spouse the church, have such sweet divine communion. Of many they are united in one whole, by the divine skill. Here are silver pillars, set in a bottom of gold, covered with royal purple, and the whole lined with love.

How great is this description! It is drawn by the pen of inspiration! Observe all the parts of this celestial chariot. It is under the infallible direction of him who cannot mistake his way. See the wheels of providence, before and behind, accompanying these blessed men who show unto us the way of salvation. The angelic guards on each side, protect and escort the heavenly family. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, a people saved of the Lord!

3. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it: the day long foretold is now arrived. And when these days of the old dispensation are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord. Ezekiel xliii. 27.

How glorious, how precious, how honourable is the day of the Lord! Let us go out of our habitations, and worldly affairs, to behold the King of Glory in the beauty of holiness, wearing the splendid crown of his mediatorial authority. This is the day so highly celebrated by the holy prophets: that day in which the Root of Jesse shall stand for an ensign of the people. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

DISCOURSE III.

Evangelical Truth exhibited, or the Covenant of Grace opened.

THE blessings flowing from the incarnation of the Son of God are exhibited in the Gospel: they arise from the free unmerited love of God—are innumerable and unspeakable—include every good thing in this world, both of a spiritual and temporal nature:—and finally, the eternal felicities of the world to come. All the particulars which crowd upon our observation here it is impossible to illustrate in that full extensive manner, which their nature and importance require. Indeed the united efforts of the evangelic ministry are not superior to the important duty. It has been the constant exercise, not to say unwearied labour, of all true ministers of the Gospel, to exhibit, illustrate, and apply them; and it must be their employment unto the end. When that arrives, it will be seen how far short their best exertions have been.

We have before us the whole body of evangelic truth—the particulars of that covenant which is contained in the everlasting Gospel. This opens those divine counsels which have been kept secret since the world began: here we see the purposes

of God respecting mankind, and their happy effects: we rise now above the divine institutions which we have considered, to those sure decrees, immutable constitutions, or unchangeable principles, which give being, form, and effect to that plan which is well ordered in all things, and includes the characters and circumstances of all those persons who shall compose the true body of Christ, and eternally enjoy the benefits of his meritorious life and death.

The first object that calls our attention here, is the book of life, in which all the names of the Redeemed are enrolled. Here we have that catalogue which is written by the Spirit of the living God, and dictated by the sovereignty of the divine will. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy: it is not of man that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. This book is the record of mercy, concerning those whom the Father hath chosen in the Son, and given to him for his peculiar people.

The Scripture doctrine of election, and particularly as it is represented in the Gospel, is the free, unmoved, sovereign, uncontrouled act of the Father: first, with respect to the person of the Redeemer; and secondly, of every individual person of the redeemed. Their names are written in the book of life of the Lamb, before the creation was formed. He was set apart from all eternity to be the Saviour of his body, and they, in relation

to the same act, are called God's elect. They are chosen in, and with their head: for his sake they are set apart to obtain salvation; and through him it shall not fail. It is an act that distinguishes the love of God to miserable wretched creatures: in this we see the exceeding riches of his grace in his love towards his elect, for it is irrespective of any goodness in the objects of it. It is eternal, absolute, and irrevocable: so personal, that not an individual can be added or diminished. It reaches to the chief of sinners, and often the worst of moral characters. We must not omit to observe, that election includes sanctification and holiness, as a means to attain eternal life and glory as the end; and the whole, both means and end, secured by the electing God of grace. This then, you see, is the first article in the book of life; it runs through, and is seen in every page.

This doctrine of election, which runs so clearly through the whole system of Revelation, explains the precise meaning of those general terms so frequently used in the Gospel. The words all, the world, every man, &c. can mean no more, when applied to the church, than those persons for whom the Redeemer laid down his life. Our Lord calls them a little flock, in opposition to the multitude of the ungodly, who persecute and distress his followers. He assures us they are few, in comparison of the many who hear but do not cordially receive his doctrine: but that they are

many, when considered in their collective united capacity. For these he laid down his life; they are the ransomed of the Lord, and shall come to Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, out of every nation, kindred, language, and generation: when gathered together, they will be an innumerable multitude, which no figures can compute; the infinitely Wise only can reckon them up in order, for in his book every member is written. These, and these alone, in contradistinction to all the the reprobate, are entitled to, and shall infallibly enjoy the blessings of the incarnation. These are stated in this covenant which now lies open before us.

It is not necessary to take notice of the distinction which many eminent authors make here, viz. the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace; the first made with Christ, and the second with the elect. These are not two covenants, but two statements of one and the same covenant, and to illustrate the absolute fulness and certainty of it in all the particular blessings specified. It is called a testament; or to express it in our own familiar style, the will of him who died for us. Whilst he was alive it had no effect: it was then but a declaration of his mind: but after his death it is of legal authority, and every article must be punctually complied with in the execution of it. The executor, who is a person of equal dignity and authority with the testator, cannot fail doing his duty according to the will left in his hands.

Hence the blessed Jesus assured his disconsolate friends just before his death, that the divine Spirit of truth should give them the full possession and enjoyment of all the grace he had ever spoken to them of: his words are, "He shall take of the things that are mine, and show them unto you, and shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." The truth, nature, and effects of which they did not understand, should now be opened and fully applied.

We shall only here take notice of a few of the most prominent articles, and of these such as are personally applicable to each of the elect people of God. The four following we shall distinguish, viz. regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. These and others, which shall be exhibited, takes in all that scheme of evangelic truth contained in the Gospel of God our Saviour, and exhibit those innumerable blessings, of which the incarnation is the procuring cause.

I. Regeneration. This is a leading blessing, as it opens the way for all that follow. It is a renovation, both of our state in relation to God, and of our disposition towards his most holy law, and divine perfections. The wretchedness of our state and circumstances need not be repeated here, but the blessed change we now take notice of, by which we are brought out of this horrible misery, compels us just to name it. Our state in relation to God, and all true happiness, is renovated or

changed. It is made anew, as the word regeneration signifies: it is a translation out of the kingdom of darkness, from death to life, so great as to be above description. The darkness is extreme, the death unutterable, and both eternal and irrecoverable but by regeneration. The change of the legal state of mankind was effected by our blessed Lord in his state of humiliation. It is of this he speaks, when he says to his apostles, "Ye have followed me in the regeneration:" ye have been my companions in my journeyings, whilst I have been labouring to renew the state of my church; which renovation shall extend over the whole world, from these small beginnings, like the little leaven that leavens the whole lump; and as the state of the world is changed, so it shall enjoy the light and liberty of the Gospel. Our blessed Lord begins in his own person and ministry that work of regeneration, which shall terminate in the restitution of all things: when men and things shall be restored from the bondage of corruption, and the word of the truth of the Gospel, ministered first by the apostles of Christ, through all succeeding ages, by the power of the Holy Ghost, shall carry on this great work of reformation from degree to degree, and from glory to glory. Now there is liberty of access to God; darkness and death no more stand in the way: the law itself opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers; and there is now no condemnation, because the offence hath

ceased; the law being fulfilled, and justice satisfied. It is the change effected on the mind, in renewing our corrupt sinful dispositions, which is particularly intended by regeneration. This is a work which no hand can effect but the invincible spirit of grace: it is spiritual, being the operation of spirit; spirit acting upon spirit; the Spirit of God quickening, reviving, awakening, raising, and renewing the fallen depraved spirits of men, so that they shall be brought into that state of access to, and acceptance with, God, to which law and justice invite; with those dispositions or qualifications of mind which shall be approved of God, and be a source of happiness to themselves.

The necessity of this change of heart is fully opened by our blessed Lord, in his conversation with Nicodemus, in which he compares it to a birth; assuring him that he must be born again, and that not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. A spiritual birth is effected by the operation of the Spirit of God, in which he renews the soul, forming it into the image of Christ in righteousness, and true holiness: the divine and moral character of Christ is the pattern, according to which his Spirit regenerates, creates, and forms all his members, calling them effectually to a spiritual union with him on the principles of that divine truth which he inculcated. The Holy Spirit illuminates the understanding, with a clear knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; informs the judgment in all

the parts of it; disposes the will to embrace and submit to it; raises the affections to love him who is the author of it; and enables the whole soul to rely on him as the certain and infallible Saviour, who is mighty and able to save unto the uttermost. In all this the soul is wholly passive; regeneration is a work in which it can take no part, any more than in its own formation: he who made it a living soul, can only make it a quickened spirit: this is the operation of his power, which he, in mercy and love, puts forth upon it to form it anew, and make it like Christ.

It is true, the depravity and corruption, which have so long reigned over the soul, do resist and oppose these operations, and never would yield. But this the omnipotent Workman removes and destroys; having delivered the soul from these tyrants, he makes it a willing captive to the person and cause of Christ; so that it now returns unto God by him, convinced that there is no other way of salvation.

The workings of the Spirit of grace, in bringing the souls of men to the enjoyment of the blessings we now treat of, are illustrated by the operations of the elements of nature on the various objects they are connected with. Air, wind, fire, and water are each of them alluded to, to describe the nature and the manner of his dealings with those persons whom he regenerates, and brings out of nature into grace. It is his breath can raise an

army of living men out of a valley of dry bones. As the wind, he is sovereign, powerful, and irresistible in his regenerating energy on the redeemed soul. Like fire he pierces and penetrates the inmost recesses of the heart, enlightening the mind, while he consumes and destroys its prejudices. After the manner of water, he softens the hard and stony heart, and washes away the defilements of original and actual sin with the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of his omnipotent agency.

Here we meet with those deep convictions of sin and misery, which arise from a knowledge of the law; that sincere conversion, or turning to God, which every regenerate soul must profess; that evangelical, true repentance which worketh salvation not to be repented of; those holy resolutions of looking to Christ, which are the genuine exercise of the broken and contrite heart; that reformation of life and manners which is so particularly required in the blessed Gospel: that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God: and that trust and confidence in God, which is both the duty and practice of the renewed soul. Upon each of these subjects we might greatly enlarge our illustration; but to avoid prolixity, we shall only refer to the numerous pious authors who have professedly written of them*.

II. Justification. This blessing exhibited in

* See Baxter's Call; Allen's Alarm; Doddridge's Rise and

the new covenant naturally stands next, and is connected with regeneration. It is this which gives being to that, as no creature can be justified till it has a being; and it is certain that justification implies both life and action. Life first, which is communicated by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; from whence arise those acts of faith and repentance which prove the soul to be alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith is among the first acts of the new creature; it is therefore compared to the eye, looking; to the ear, hearing; to the hand, taking hold of what is offered or presented to it.

The all-sufficient atonement, or satisfaction, made by the incarnate Saviour, is the foundation on which justification stands. He was made sin for us: he submitted to the imputation of our guilt, and suffered the just for the unjust, as if he had been the actual offender: he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Hence the release or acquittance of all whom he personated in his righteous life and death becomes a debt due to him. It is an article in this covenant, that "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge," saith the eternal Father, "shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." It is an act of God, in justice to him who has

Progress; On Regeneration; Brown's Practical Piety; Stafford on Sin and Grrce; Romain's Life and Walk of Faith, &c. &c.

honoured and magnified the law, in which they are pronounced just and righteous: they are proclaimed to be free from guilt, and no longer liable to condemnation or punishment. All former crimes are forgiven, and from the instant this act takes place, they are legally innocent; the law has no further power to make any demands for past transgressions. Its threatening aspect is changed; its fiery indignation quenched; its curses wholly cancelled; and all the blessings it contains become the personal property of the redeemed, regenerated, justified soul who believes.

The subject matter of our justification, is the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the cause producing that effect. His most righteous life, and obedient death, constitute the plan, and produce that reason for which we are justified. His meritorious life and death are imputed to the believer with equal certainty, that his sins were charged upon, and imputed to Christ: he is therefore called, and truly is, the Lord our Righteousness; that is, his righteousness is ours: what he did and suffered, was for us. The worth and value of the whole is made over, and, by this act of grace, placed to the credit of the insolvent creature which believes in him. He is made of God unto us righteousness. He hath set us *right with God*, who were altogether wrong, having lost the path of truth and duty: *with the law*, which was contrary to all the dispositions of our minds

and actions of our lives; *in the way to heaven*, to which justification is the entrance. He hath righted all persons, and all things, by the interposition of his righteous person in all the righteous actions of his most holy life; we have the blessing and benefit of the whole; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

In this divine act of justification there is not only a discharge from debt, and a proclamation of innocence, but also an acceptance of the persons of the justified. We are therefore said to be accepted in the beloved; that is, in the person of Christ, through his righteousness and merit. This is a distinction peculiar to the regenerate. It is a common blessing to all the household of faith. By it we are restored to our father's forfeited favour, and received into his happy family, and as such are made partakers of every good thing for life and godliness, through time and eternity. Acceptance of the pardoned offender is a peculiarity that distinguishes this act of justice, and raises it above human comprehension. The infinitely just and holy God brings home to himself, and establishes in his house, those who have been rebels to his government, and enemies to his person. He gives them the privilege of special communion, because they are reinstated into the favour and affection of their Creator: they are no more considered as aliens, but of the household of God.

There is a new relationship takes place in consequence of this act; the pardoned transgressor becomes a child of God. The relation of a creature to a Creator is highly magnified by that of adoption: Christ hath redeemed them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Thus justification is an act of the free favour or grace of God, wherein he pardoneth all the sins of regenerated, penitent, repenting sinners: he accounteth and accepteth them as righteous; not for any thing done by them, or wrought in them, but only for the perfect obedience, and full satisfaction, which the Son of God wrought out by himself in his incarnate state, as their personal substitute and surety, which God, in law and justice, imputes to them: accounting the actions and sufferings of Emmanuel to be theirs; absolving them from all obligations to fulfil the law as a covenant, by which to obtain justification and acceptance with him. It is an act of justice to our satisfying surety; but it is an act of free, unmerited grace, and sovereign mercy to us, through him in whom we are accepted The obedience and death of Christ did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to the infinite and inflexible justice of God for all those who are justified. He accepted of the surety what he might have demanded of the principal. But in his exceeding

rich grace towards us he provided that surety, who was ONLY able to pay the rigid satisfaction. He accepts of both, and graciously imputes his righteousness to all who receive him by faith, for justification, acceptance, and eternal life.

Having noticed the foundation, ground, or reason on which the regenerate obtain justification and acceptance with God; we must also observe the *means* by which this great and invaluable blessing is received. This brings us to the application and experimental part of the doctrine. It is the personal concern which any man has in it, that makes it a blessing to him. Many may know and believe it as a truth, and yet have no practical operation of it on the mind. It is a subject, not only to be known, but to be enjoyed; and it is the enjoyment of it which the heaven-born soul ardently labours for.

Justification is a forensic term, and made use of by the holy apostles, to accommodate the acts of God to the capacities and states of men. As in a court of Judicature an accused person is deemed innocent till his cause be tried by the evidence of witnesses, who prove overt acts of treason, or of disobedience, and then he is declared guilty: now sentence of condemnation must pass, and the trembling culprit manifests the distress of his soul in the language of deep repentance. So the procedure of God towards those who are to be interested in the blessings of the incarnation may

have a seeming severity; but it is only the operations of the law on the awakened, regenerated conscience, by which the mind and rest of the sinner is troubled. He knows that he is gulity before God, and dare not plead innocency; he stands accused and condemned in the presence of the Searcher of Hearts, the Judge of all the earth. He cries for mercy and pardon, perhaps with the anxiety of despair. He sees in the law his just condemnation and endless misery. He may be yet a stranger to the way of acceptance with God, and labour hard to recommend himself by his own works of righteousness. How great is the terror and affliction of his soul, when he hears the law denouncing him to the lowest hell, and sees the revealed wrath of God ready to be executed upon him without remedy; now he knows, experimentally, the terrors of the Lord—he believes he must be lost for ever.

It is no easy matter oft to allay the storms thus raised in the troubled conscience; but as certainly as Joseph meant kindness to his alarmed, trembling brethren, when he imprisoned, and spake roughly unto them; and especially to Benjamin his dearest brother, whom he insisted upon being his bond servant for ever: so certainly does the kindness and love of God our Saviour appear towards that trembling, afflicted soul to whom he has shown the evil and guilt of sin. He is about to justify him from all things from which he could not be justified

any other way. He is by this means humbling, proving, and preparing him, that he may place him in his own house. He is emptying him of his own righteousness, that he may satisfy him with the righteousness of God, which is by faith.

Faith is a principal means employed in the matter of justification. It is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit. It is, therefore, distinguished in its nature and effects from other kinds of faith, which have no relation to, or connexion with our being justified and accepted of God; such as a common persuasion of the truth of any report, called an historical faith: temporary impressions made upon the mind in hearing the word, which lasteth for time, and then die away, which our Lord describes in the parable of the sower; or those miraculous or wonderful exertions, by which many may remove mountains of opposition and difficulty: neither of these have any thing to do in the subject before us. But the faith with which the apostle Paul connects justification, is a spiritual operation of the soul: first, made alive to God by the Spirit of God, as we have illustrated in the preceding article, and then assisted by him in its exercises. We said that faith is among the first acts of the new creature. It looks to Jesus, its author and finisher; it knows that he is the justifier of the ungodly; it is well assured that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; it shelters itself under his atoning blood and righteousness; it takes

hold of the divinity in humanity; it relies on the immutable promises of Jehovah; it hopes in the riches of his infinite mercy; and humbly rests on the rock of ages.

These are some of the acts of what we call a justifying faith. This saving grace is given the poor sinner, by the Spirit of Christ in the ministry of his Gospel; and by it he is enabled to take hold of Christ, to adhere to him, to rest upon him, as the Lord his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. By this means he is justified and approved of God, because he trusts to, and depends on Christ, who hath fulfilled all righteousness in his behalf; the person is justified in the use of this mean, and the mean is approved of, because of its suitableness to the end, viz. to bring the guilty soul to the justifying Saviour. Therefore being justified by faith, not as a cause or a reason of our justification; but as a means, or an instrument, by which we connect our souls to his divine person; and give, as it were, the hand to him in an everlasting covenant not to be forgotten; that he may clothe us with the garments of salvation, and cover us with the robe of righteousness; that we may be found in him, not having our own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Hence comes peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith, once more, is the act of the justified, in the same way as pardon and forgiveness are the acts of

God. He gives remission, and the believer receives it. Henceforward his iniquities are not imputed unto him. The justified person lives by faith on the incarnate Son of God, who is risen from the dead, and who, because he liveth, shall infallibly secure him in his happy state, and support him in it with all the glorious blessings connected with it. He may therefore joyfully sing with triumphant Paul, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. And with holy David: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. This blessedness then came upon ALL, who, from the beginning of the world, have trusted in the Son of God, like faithful Abraham, before his incarnation: and hath come upon ALL, who have relied on him since, for justification and acceptance; and shall come upon ALL, who believe on him to the end of time.

We have just said before, that a new relationship takes place between God and the creature, in consequence of justification, which is that of sons by an act of adoption. The justified soul is not only restored to the dignity and blessedness which it had lost by sin in Adam, but is raised to a state

infinitely higher and better. We have no intimation, either from nature or revelation, of any other creature being so privileged. It is a distinction which exalts the elect above the most glorious creature in heaven; angels delight in the services they perform to the redeemed, justified, adopted sons of God. These have a greater and more endearing interest in his love than those.

We must carefully observe, that it is in Emmanuel, the beloved of the Father, that this high and unspeakable blessing is obtained. For he hath predestinated as to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. And God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Hence the justified are received into the number of his children. They have his name put upon them; they are clothed with his righteousness; are made partakers of his divine nature; the Holy Spirit dwells in their mortal bodies, and they are made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

We may well be astonished at the infinite catalogue of blessings now opened to our view. We cannot stay even to name them, much less to enlarge upon each. But we may conclude this part of our exhibition, in the words of the apostle, wherein he declares, that, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to

come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

III. Sanctification. This is a particular stipulation of the covenant of grace. It is a leading article in the body of evangelic truth, and exhibits the fountain of holiness, with all the blessings of truth and grace resulting from and connected with it. If justification, and our acceptance into the divine family, be an act of God, which takes place at and with regeneration, sanctification is that work which commences at the same time on those blessed persons whose names are in the book of life. It is to make those persons holy, who were before defiled and impure. So it signifies in all those Scriptures where the elect are said to be sanctified: "Such were some of you, but ye are sanctified by the Spirit of our God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love."

We have now before us the great, precious, absolute, and free promises of the new covenant. Those which may be called conditional, and which concern only the present life, we shall not enlarge

upon in this place; but such as intimate, or clearly express, the will of God on this subject, deserve our attention.

The depravity and pollution of our nature, which has been so largely illustrated in the first part of this work *, ought to be recollected here; because if we forget this, the doctrine of sanctification will appear of comparatively small importance; and the promises which have an immediate respect to it seem trifling, if not empty parade. But when we know the defilements of sin, and feel the bitterness of its nature experimentally in ourselves, we shall then see the propriety and fitness of every promise, which carries the assurance of sanctification in its contents. Accordingly, the blessed Saviour speaks freely and absolutely on this head; saying, in his own person, "I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born." In that day shall there be a great mourning, deep humiliation, because of sin; every family, and each member of the family, shall join in the mournful lamentation.

But, "In that day there shall also be a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." This

* Discourse IV. and V.

fountain is the fulness of merit, which is in the person of the incarnate Son of God, and is opened in all the actions and sufferings of his life; and to which the regenerated, justified, and accepted person has free and welcome access; the benefits of which he enjoys in sanctification. Every promise is an invitation, support, and security to his faith. Hence the same authority declares, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will give them one heart, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me. Yea I will rejoice over them to do them good."

This is a work of the Spirit of God, in which he manifests his divine perfections. It is illustrated by many operations in life, which are familiar and easy to be comprehended, as washing, building, growing, increasing, and many others. These are different, both in their nature and effects, from those of the elements, which illustrate his operations in the work of regeneration, and which we have taken notice of before. Here we have a work

of equal importance to that, but carried on in a more gradual, progressive way. It is indeed a washing with water by the word ; a washing in consequence of regeneration ; an application of the waters of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, by which the guilt and pollution of sin is taken away. Justification, it is true, removes the guilt, but it is by sanctification the defilements of sin are washed away. It is therefore a cleansing as with water. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. It is a building of God through the Spirit, that is, the work goes on in a progressive manner from the first beginning till it be completed. It is fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to him be glory both now and for ever, amen.

In his operations, renewing the state and dispositions of the soul, we took notice of the opposition which arises from the natural, or rather unnatural, enmity of the heart to the law of God. Here we might survey the whole Christian warfare, and point out the opposition made to this work by the old man of sin, whose final ruin is intended, and shall be accomplished by it. " The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit

against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." So that there is a continual conflict; sometimes the one prevails, and sometimes the other, on particular occasions: but as David triumphed over Saul, so shall the Spirit of truth and holiness overcome all errors and iniquity in those persons who are entitled to, and in any measure are made partakers of, the blessings we now describe. The opposition made by all enemies, whether devils, men, or unsubdued corruptions in the fallen creature, make this work so much the more conspicuous; while they oppose it they are the means of promoting it, as is gloriously illustrated in the life and death of the incarnate Son of God. The purposes of whose grace were brought about, and accomplished, by the wrath of his enemies.

The whole man, soul, body, and spirit is the subject of this work. By spirit, we mean his superior faculties, as the mind, conscience, rational will: by soul, the sensitive appetite, with the affections and passions: by the body, the outward man; the tabernacle and instrument of the soul. It is a personal blessing, and includes all the degrees of holiness with which the elect shall be beautified: it is a living, spiritual, immortal work, effected by the agency of the Holy Ghost. It is great, being the operation of the great God; great in its nature and effects: it ennobles the soul, and makes it happy. It is solid, well performed, real,

not visionary, firm, and cannot be dissolved, permanent, lasting, and durable as eternity. How glorious, beautiful, pleasing, and delightful is this work! It makes the King's daughter all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.

Thus sanctification is a blessed and gracious work, carried on in the persons of the people of God, by the means of his word and ordinances, which are all appointed for this end. It is promoted from degree to degree by the Spirit of the Lord, like the shining light which groweth more and more unto the perfect day. God the Spirit worketh in believers, both to will and do of his own good pleasure. This work is the grand security of morality. It is the source of all acceptable obedience; and this obedience becomes the righteousness of the saints, as it arises out of and flows from the righteousness of Christ. Perseverance is the certain effect of it. The sanctified hold on their way, and become stronger and stronger; they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. But for the security arising from the perfections, the promises, and the operations of God on the souls of his chosen, they might well despair of being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. But in as much as the Son of God, clothed in our humanity, is the surety to his saints for every stipulated blessing, even to the highest glory and eternal felicity; it is the greatest offence to him to call

in question his ability and willingness, to carry them through this evil dangerous world, and bring them safe to heaven.

IV. We shall say but a few words here on Glorification, as we have proposed to consider it more at large in its proper place. However, we may just say, that this contains all the stipulations of the covenant of grace. If we could comprehend all that is intimated in this word, we might be able to exhibit all that is revealed in the New Testament. But in our present imperfect state, the utmost ingenuity, penetration, and research, cannot discover what God hath prepared for those who love him. It intimates a restoration of all we had lost by sin; the final destruction of sin and misery; the recovery of our persons, estates, and enjoyments; that all are secured by the infinite love, mercy, and power of God to all eternity: every enemy, and all adversity, are removed to an infinite, eternal distance from the people and place of glory.

Glorification and sanctification are so nearly connected, that there is only the narrow river of death between them. This the sanctified must pass when they enter into glory; but nothing that is inimical to their peace, afflictive to their persons, or injurious to their felicity, can pass that boundary. On the whole, we may see from what we have exhibited in this discourse,

1. The great importance of all the doctrines revealed and propagated in the Gospel covenant.

They exhibit the infinite blessings and certain effects of the incarnation, and assure us that the design of that momentuous event is not in vain. They open to a guilty race subjects worthy of the most cordial reception, because they are full of truth and grace. They demand the attention of the mind; they administer instruction, light, and life to the rational soul. This is a faithful saying, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, the greatest, the worst of sinners. Hence the importance and duty of believing in him; and blessed are all they that put their trust in him: blessed are they that do his commandments, that, by their obedience, they may prove their right to, and their enjoyment of, the tree of life.

2. The covenant of grace stands upon an infinitely firmer basis than the covenant of works. The first was made with Adam in behalf of his posterity: the second, with the Son of God in behalf of his seed the elect. The first failed; the second stands good, because supported by Emmanuel, God with us.

This is the covenant which gives being to all other covenants recorded in the Holy Scripture. Those which God was pleased to make with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and others, arose out of, and were founded on this. All the blessings, either of a temporal or spiritual nature, contained in these, came from this as their source; and as they were typical, so they were eminently illustra-

tive of the infinitely greater and richer blessings of it. Hence,

3. Here is a blessed fountain of consolation to the elect, who, by regeneration, know the plague of their own hearts; by justification, have access to, and peace with, God through Jesus Christ; by adoption, enjoy communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son; by sanctification, are adorned with the beauties of holiness, made partakers of great and precious promises, and fitted for the glory and blessedness of heaven; and by the infallible intercession of the glorified head, and the unceasing operations of his Spirit, have constant blessings flowing from it, upon their souls, their bodies, and all the circumstances of both.

DISCOURSE IV.

The Subject continued, or the Covenant of Grace further exhibited.

The particulars of our last discourse, however important in their nature, and blessed in their consequences to the elect,, are so intimately connected with other prominent articles on this sublime subject, that they also ought to be brought forward, because their importance is equally great, and their application no less necessary. The blessed Gospel abounds with all good things; all spiritual blessings are found stipulated in it. The

incarnate Saviour hath made it the repository of his grace. Its contents are exceedingly glorious; nevertheless all the grace it contains, falls infinitely short of the glory it reveals.

The blessed truths which I would exhibit in the present discourse are, reconciliation with God; union with Christ; the divine image restored to the soul; and divine communion. These glorious subjects we see clearly stated in the Gospel, and are intimately connected with those we have treated of, arising from the same source, exhibited by the same means, and applied by the same beneficient hand.

1. Reconciliation with God. This important blessing is a certain effect resulting from the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ. As a priest, he hath satisfied offended justice by offering up to God his own most precious blood No less a sacrifice than the blood of him, who is personally God, could be admitted to satisfy the insulted, dishonoured perfections of Deity. But he who is by nature God, hath taken upon him the complete human nature; a soul that could suffer unspeakable sorrows; and a body that could be sacrificed to the pouring out of its most sacred blood, and the exhausting, or drying up of its vital spirits, and animal juices, that he might, by such a sacrifice, satisfy for us, and lay a certain foundation for our reconciliation with God.

Thus God was in Christ, reconciling the world

unto himself. The divine nature, in the person of the Son, assumed the real nature of man into actual union with himself; so that his one person was, in his lowest abasement, and is now, in his exalted state, divine and human. The human nature of the Son of God is not a person of itself; for in that case he must be two persons; but the divine person of the eternal Son hath taken unto himself a true, rational, immaterial, immortal soul, created and fitted on purpose for his habitation; and a body of flesh and blood which constitute one person, enjoying both natures, in a way inconceivable and inexpressible by creatures. Of him we may truly say, as the Jews said of David their king, that he is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. The mighty God hath not only exalted our nature into a personal unity with himself, but he hath also entered into the most endearing relations with us, that he might, by reconciling us to himself, and to all the dispensations of his mercy, make us blessed and happy in every divine enjoyment.

The office and exercise of the Mediator of this covenant, deserve some special notice here. This is an office of high importance: it is such as requires every qualification, suited to make peace between parties at variance, or even at enmity. That the almighty, holy, and righteous God is at variance with sinful rebellious creatures is manifest, and has been fully illustrated. It is equally evident, that they are at enmity with

him. In the Creator, there is not, nor can possibly be, any enmity to his creatures. But a righteous variance and just resentment there is; because they have sinned and acted contrary to his positive injunctious. But the guilty creature has contracted an enmity which contains, in its nature, a mortal hatred to the divine nature and government. If then offended Deity and guilty creatures ever be reconciled, it must be by a mediator capable of treating with both parties. This person only is the incarnate Son of God, who is possessed of all divine perfections, and human qualifications, well fitted for such a service. He is therefore appointed and called of God to this office, and is the Mediator between God and man.

He exercises this as our great atoning high priest, who of necessity must also have somewhat to offer, as the typical priests of different orders had, when they approached the divine presence. The manner of their officiating was simple, but sublime; humble, but majestic; solemn, but assured. Their appearing before God, was only the shadow of that most pure, divine, lowly, glorious, real substance, which followed close behind them. They were therefore not rejected on his account. But he makes a nearer approach to the throne of justice and judgment, and they must retire and depart. Here he transacts by himself the whole business of his office; not in the manner to which he submitted in his humbled, incarnate state, which was with much

grief of heart for the mischiefs of sin, both to God and man; accompanied with great fatigue of body in performing his work; together with clouds of of darkness, and foreboding fears often oppressing his righteous soul, expressed in strong crying and tears, before his eternal Father. But he now comes forward with the assured confidence of a beloved and only Son, both to demand what he had purchased, and to reconcile offending creatures to a just and holy Creator.

The effect of this office is a complete reconciliation of the offended party, founded on the satisfaction and atonement of the Mediator, of which we have treated at large. The other part of this important business, wholly belongs to the offending, to sinful, and guilty man, to whom he must also apply for the same purpose. The eternal, immutable High Priest condescends to act in the character and capacity of a prophet; not merely to open futurity, and foretel things to come, but more particularly to give that information and knowledge, which are indispensably necessary to our being reconciled to God. Justification, on the Creator's part, implies reconciliation; because he cannot justify those to whom he is not reconciled; or pardon the transgressions of those with whom he is not agreed. In order to effect this agreement or reconciliation with God, it behoves the Mediator to treat personally with the offender, and to show him his guilt, deformity, and wretchedness. He

gives him such an understanding of his true state, as shall humble him, and bring him to a reconciled Father.

In this most important of all concerns, he is treated in a rational manner, with arguments suited to his capacity and circumstances, arising from immortal, unchangeable principles, to which he can no longer refuse his assent. The word of reconciliation, contained in the whole of the blessed Gospel, is addressed to the understanding; by which the mind is made acquainted with the true state of things in relation to God, to itself, and to eternity. From what degree of light, communicated by this means, is conveyed to the soul, it cannot help reflecting seriously, on its personal interest and concern in them; exercising and passing righteous judgment on itself in relation to them. Being quickened by regeneration, as we have before shown, it now hears the voice of the Son of God, who interposes his authority with heaven in its favour; the eyes of the understanding, in some degree, enlightened, see the person of the Peacemaker in his true and amiable character, and submits to the force of his reasoning with due submission; under a full persuasion of the fitness and propriety of his proposals, it affectionately embraces them.

The principal obstacles to the operations of our divine Reconciler, arise from the enmity which we have all along observed in the carnal mind, which,

the apostle assures us, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, in the nature of things, can it be; for it is directly the reverse of it: it is a bitter, deep-rooted, irreconcileable hatred, implanted in the soul by sin, which drives the fallen creature from God, and the path of duty prescribed by his righteous precepts. It is opposite to the nature and will of God in the highest degree. It is therefore an evil that must be removed by a total destruction.

Hence the overtures of peace, or the offers of reconciliation are ineffectual, till this enmity is overcome; for it is the great and principal barrier that stands in the way of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And a very strong one it is indeed, if we only reflect, that it arises out of all those mental disorders, which we have abundantly described in the first part of this work. It is their united force and energy, acting against God and all. Goodness tending to the ruin and destruction of the creature, as certainly as a leprosy, a poison, or a plague destroy the body of those who are infected with them.

To effect the removal of this enmity, something more than moral suasion, or the force of human eloquence, is necessary; the divine power, accompanying the means of reconciliation, is applied to the soul; by which it is brought into willing subjection to the divine will. Here the blessed Redeemer manifests his authority and influence, by

constraining the objects of his mercy and grace to renounce their proud prejudices, self-righteousness, and bigotry, and become his humble and affectionate disciples. Having learned from him the truth of their miserable state, the readiness of their offended Creator to receive them into favour, by repentance and faith in his atoning blood, and the eternal blessedness and glory, which he hath provided for them; they turn from their enmity to God, and the way of salvation through his incarnate Son, and embrace him as their eternal all. A reconciliation on the offender's part is now effected, and the long lost prodigal is brought home to his father. The enmity of his carnal, sensual, beastly heart is removed, and he embraces the will of God manifested in his word, ordinances, dispensations, and providences. He becomes a willing captive to sovereign grace.

The divine Mediator, having effected a reconciliation between God and guilty man, by the powerful virtue of his most holy blood, and by the all-conquering efficacy of his infinite wisdom; he now becomes the surety of its continuance. He is the guarantee for both parties, that they shall never be at odds again; the breach is completely made up, with high satisfaction on both sides. The Father is well pleased with the righteousness of his only begotten Son, which is an everlasting righteousness, both in its nature and effects. The believer is equally well satisfied, being assured that his gifts

and callings are without repentance; and having loved him, he rests in his love, being the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. But this will appear further on exhibiting the following blessing as proposed.

2. Union with Christ. This is the fruit of reconciliation, a blessed consequence arising out of it; in which we see the endearing love, and mutual affection of the Redeemer and the redeemed. Now ye, who were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off. And you that were enemies in your minds, yet now hath he reconciled in one body, by the ministry of reconciliation. Peace is made on a sure and lasting foundation, which shall never be interrupted, or broken, by all the united strength of infernal enemies; because there is a personal, indissolvable union effected by the incarnate Saviour, between him and his elect; therefore he is their head, and they are his body.

We have taken notice of the eternal union subsisting between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the one undivided essence, which is real, but inexplicable as to the manner of each persons subsistance; and of the hypostatical union, which is the person of the Son taking unto himself a true soul

and body, of the human nature, by which he is constituted Emmanuel, and the Mediator of the new covenant. But here we have the mystical union subsisting between God the Son, and all believers. The apostle acknowledges this to be a great mystery; next in magnitude to the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. These are subjects which the Author of them ONLY can comprehend: angels may desire to look into them, but cannot develope them: they are matters of faith in heaven, as well as on earth; and are, without doubt, the occasion of wonder and praise to the glorified above, as well as the redeemed below. For though they be obscure, and mysterious as to their nature and mode of existence, yet there is clear evidence that they do exist; and it is our duty to know and submit to it. But to return.

This subject is full of consolation to the believer; it opens to him the fountains of life and happiness; it points out the blessed and only Potentate, raising the indigent from the dust, and placing them on thrones of glory and honour. It shows us all the endearing characters which he sustains, in relation to the wants and woes of his redeemed people.

We have just made mention of the priestly office, which manifests the divinity and holiness of his nature; and of his prophetic, which illustrates his infinite wisdom and prudence, as exercised in reconciling sinners to God. Here we take parti-

cular notice of his kingly office; as by virtue of it he unites himself to his subjects, and becomes their defence, protection, and salvation: and the elect unite themselves to him, as made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In this view we may call it a political union, founded on the capacity and qualifications of the Mediator, who is set on the hill of Zion and the throne of David, to order and establish his spiritual government for ever; confirmed by the cheerful voluntary suffrage of the believer, who feels infinite satisfaction in his obedience, and rejoices in the dignity of his sovereign.

There are many characters in the Scripture by which this unspeakable blessing is distinguished: by looking into a few of them, we may learn somewhat of its nature and properties. It is an union which the eternal Father approves of, and delights in; he is concerned in it as the Father of his only begotten Son, whose satisfaction, honour, and glory are equally dear to him as his own. In short, it is the effect of the Father's promise, that the incarnate Son should see of the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied. Those for whom he suffered, according to law, should be legally united to him, by a personal, spiritual, real, intimate, indissolvable, though mysterious union. If we look through all nature, and observe the connexion subsisting in all the parts of it, particularly in the animate and rational creation, we see the indispensable neces-

sity of an union between the great and the small, and a mutual exercise of these parts for the benefit and happiness of the whole. Hence the necessary union of soul and body in man; of the soul in all its faculties, and of the body in all its members. This unity, in subjects so clear and easy to be understood, is frequently alluded to by the blessed Spirit of truth, to illustrate this great subject of the believer's personal union with Christ. It is the union of the persons of saints, to the divine person of the incarnate Saviour. They are the body united to him the glorified head. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

That natural relationship which all the elect had with Adam, as creatures descending from him, is now dissolved. They have no more dependence on the covenant of works, or the merit of their own moral duties for justification; they are now married to another, that is, to Christ; even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

This is a spiritual union, effected by the Spirit of Christ; for the same Spirit dwells in the head and in the members. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of Christ dwell in you: ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you: for ye are the temple of the living God." It is through the King Mediator that "We have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The Spirit, which proceedeth from the

Father and the Son, joins the souls of men to the person and the cause of Emmanuel; one mind, motive, and design, animates the head and the body.

It is a real union; "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." It is founded in truth; extremely distant from fiction, metaphor, or romance; as real and certain as the union of Eve to the person of Adam, out of a part of whose body she was formed, and made an help meet for him: so the redeemed are a body formed for, and united to him, who slept the deep sleep of a shameful accursed death on the cross; to the end that a seed should serve him, and live to the eternal praise of his glory. See the conclusion of the twenty-second psalm, which, from the twenty-second verse, illustrates the certain union of the congregation of believers, to the person of the King Mediator, as an effect of those sufferings, and unparalleled sorrows, which he endured, according to the description in the former part of it; and which we have seen so fully accomplished in our illustration of the proof of the incarnation.

It is an union so intimate, that nature fails in metaphors fully to unfold it. Hence it is not in the power of eloquence to illustrate a subject so inimitably great. By pious contemplation, however, we may see much of its glory, and enjoy much consolation from it; but human capacity cannot investigate, nor comprehend, this sublime mystery. Some parts of it may be discovered by the illustra-

ing glass of allusion; which, also, Christ himself hath put into our hands for this purpose. He compares himself to the vine, and all who are united to him to the branches. This is a very proper allusion, as it shows us the virtue of a divine person, communicating life and joy to weak humanity, in the closest connexion of personal unity. It is illustrated by the intimate relations of the members of the human body: "For, as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." By the union subsisting between the husband and the wife: that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead. For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready: prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. By a foundation and the superstructure which stands upon it: "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building is fitly framed together." Finally, by the union of the Father, and the Son: "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." We can rise no higher in the illustration of the intimate union of the elect with Christ. Here our conceptions fail; and upon the whole infer, that it is immutable, unchangeable, indissolveable.

There are many other allusions, to which we might refer, of an inferior nature, which exhibit and illustrate this subject: as when Christ is said to be the Apostle and High Priest of our profession; the Bishop of souls; the good Shepherd of the sheep; and, indeed, every character he sustains, as Mediator, Head, and King of his church: together with the corresponding characters which distinguish his members. But it is not necessary to enlarge; therefore I would only observe, how extensive the blessed subject of union with Christ is, and how full of consolation to the believer.

Without further enlargement shall finish our remarks, by taking notice of the bonds of it, which are two: first, the Spirit of Christ on his part; and, secondly, faith on ours. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and uniteth the quickened soul to the incarnate Son of God. He maintains this unity between the parties. He enables the guilty creature to believe in Christ, strengthens his weak faith, and assists him in the particular exercises of it. So that when the Spirit reveals the things of Christ, and opens the eyes of the understanding to behold them; the faith of his operation embraces the Saviour in his doctrine, and unites the soul to him alone for salvation and eternal life. These are strong bonds, which cannot be broken; bonds of love, which are stronger than death. The Holy Ghost cannot fail to confirm and improve this union, because he abideth with the believer for

ever. And his faith cannot fail, because it is supported by the intercession of the blessed Mediator: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Let us now proceed to take notice of the next subject exhibited; which is,

3. The divine image restored to the soul. This is a blessing of unspeakable importance: it is intimately connected with, and related to, that happy union which subsists between the Son of God, and the persons of the elect. They are "Predestinated to be conformed to his image. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

If it be enquired, Wherein doth the divine image consist? The apostle furnishes us with an answer; in which he gives a description of what it is. It is a "Being renewed in knowledge," after the image of the Creator. The Christian is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which "He hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Man was created in the image of God: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion, &c. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them." This image con-

sisted in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion; pure innocence, and sublime enjoyments, were the happy effects of such a blessed state. But the whole was soon lost, and Adam assumed another, of a quite different nature. The first man Adam was made a living soul; a spiritual, immortal creature, as to his nature and existence; but soon became earthy, in consequence of sin and transgression: and we have borne the image of the fallen, guilty, earthy parent; descending from him, and born in his likeness, after his image, which, in all the features of it, is the reverse of the likeness of God, in which he was created. But we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: the second man, the Lord from heaven, who is a quickening spirit, and makes all who are united to him spiritual and heavenly.

The apostle makes the divine image to consist in knowledge, in his epistle to the Colossians. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The Creator forms the renewed mind in knowledge, in the matter and kind of it: it is the same as he possesses in himself—a knowledge of every good thing; an experimental enjoyment of every good quality, as it is described in the same passage. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, for-

bearance, forgiveness, charity, and peace. This is heavenly and practical knowledge; richly, or abundantly, administered by the word of Christ. It is an improving and increasing knowledge. The fountain of grace. Ye know the grace of God in truth. The grace of God accompanies the knowledge of him. And to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

Another part of the divine image, we are assured by the same apostle in another epistle, is righteousness: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness." Here we see the divine principles, and right dispositions, which are communicated to the soul by the righteous merciful Creator. The righteousness of the incarnate Redeemer, is the grand pattern on which this feature of the divine likeness is formed. A clean heart, and a right spirit, is that new creation which distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous man. It effects a manifest change in the mind, which is seen in the right turn of his thoughts, regulated by the righteous law of God; in his life and conversation guided by the Gospel of God. He is not only a righteous person through the righteousness of him to whom he is united, imputed to him or placed to his account; but he has a

righteousness imparted to, and implanted in him, by which he is enabled to act righteously before God and men.

The righteousness of the saints is invariably accompanied with true holiness; for this arises out of that: hence, the new man is created after God, or in the image of God, in true holiness as well as in righteousness. It is true holiness, in contradistinction to an appearance of it, which may be assumed without the reality. True holiness is real, internal, sincere, and without hypocrisy. It is the beauty of the soul as well as of the Creator. Knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness are the principal features of the divine image, and include all the inferior characters of the new creature, which are described in various parts of the New Testament.

This unspeakable blessing is as certainly restored to the elect, through the grace of the incarnate Son of God, as it is certain that it was lost by the sin and transgression of our first parents. He indeed restored that which he took not away. He delivers them from the destructive knowledge of evil, to the acquisition and enjoyment of all good; he restores their souls to the paths of righteousness, and forms them anew into his own divine likeness; so that they are positively holy: and though they are but children, in comparison of what they shall be; yet they shall be made perfectly holy, in the degrees as well as in the matter of holiness. We

all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We may also observe, that it is the same almighty power which is manifested in both cases. The arm of omnipotence is exerted in the creation and formation of the human soul, when it is called forth into being: it is made in the image and likeness of God. Now the same arm produces this greater work of restoration, which is a new creation. It is a new building, raised out of the old ruins, better founded, and of greater beauty. Here we see the strong arm, the compassionate hand, and the inimitable wisdom of him who worketh all things after the council of his own will.

It is worthy of remark, in the last place, here, that because of the image of God and of Christ, now delineated in the nature and disposition of the new man, such as are made partakers of this great blessing are called by the name of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12. They bear the character of sons, and daughters, of babes, and children, and many more, which intimate the image and likeness of those they are descended from. They who are born of the Spirit, bear the heavenly image of the second Man, the Lord from heaven, who is the image of the invisible God.

4. Divine communion is likewise restored to the soul. This is a privilege of the highest dig-

nity and sweetest consolation:—it is the summum bonum of the rational creature. The characters we have just named intimate this, as well as the image which the children of God are created in. Here we contemplate the reciprocal love of an heavenly Father, and his divine family: the Parent well pleased smiling on his offspring: each heavenly soul exulting in his favour: peace well secured and pure triumphs here: no fear of assaults from any enemy interrupts the tranquillity of the happy family: it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, that the whole family in heaven and earth is named: and it is through him we have communion with the Father.

Union with Christ brings the saint into a state of communion; his image is a qualification by which he is fitted for actual communion, and communion is the sweet enjoyment of the divine presence. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with me. If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come into him, and make our abode with him. Here is not only a reconciliation of persons, an harmony of sentiments, and an agreement of designs, but also an happy communication of interests: God communicates himself; that is, reveals, and applies his love, mercy, and compassions to his dear children, for their comfort and joy. His natural and moral perfections, ma-

nifested in his word, are the objects of their most reverential worship and supreme delight. The person and offices of the glorious Mediator revealed in the blessed Gospel, represented in all the institutions and ordinances of it, are truly engaging and animating to their souls: they have the sweet satisfying entertainments of a divine and heavenly feast, in the company of a reconciled God in Christ. Hence they sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto their taste.

This communion is supported by the means of the word, sacraments, and prayer. These are the appointed channels by which the incarnate God communicates his free, rich grace to his dearly beloved sons and daughter. They are therefore very precious to them.

The part the believer acts in this sacred communion is very different from this statement. He has nothing but miseries arising from diseases, wants, and troubles of all kinds, which must disqualify rather than recommend him. He sees himself indeed naked and bare, and may therefore be greatly ashamed to appear in the heavenly assembly. He feels impotency and wretchedness, and hence dares not presume to hope that he ever can be a member of the blessed company. The preparations necessary on his part are far above his ability; the means he complains are used without obtaining the end: his faith is weak, his love

languid, and his hope almost lost: he cannot be persuaded often that his soul possesses any feature of the divine image; or that he is at all interested in the person, and atonement of the Son of God. Thus the most sincere lament the most deeply. But that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the other hand: how delightful are the joys, and how sweet the pleasures, arising from communion with the Father and the Son in the use of the means appointed! A great deal of the distress of sincere minds, proceeds from the disuse, or neglect of the means, together with the abuse of them; that is, relying on the performance, and not on God alone. The enjoyment of whose presence we are to seek in all; which, when sought fervently by faith and humble supplication, shall not be in vain. We might describe the numerous fears, complaints, temptations, terrors, and afflictions, to which the children of God are subject, notwithstanding the high previleges of their state: but these, however necessary to be noticed now, do not belong to our plan; we shall therefore finish with a few remarks, obviously arising out of the exhibibition now given in this discourse, and,

1. We see the way by which the ruined crea-

ture man is brought near to God. The new and living way, opened and consecrated, is through the rent vail of the Redeemer's flesh; that is, the body of Jesus broken, and his blood shed for us; by which we have boldness to enter into the holiest, or have free access to approach the throne of grace, through that one Mediator, who appears in the presence of God with all authority to execute the offices with which he is invested. Being a priest, he hath reconciled the Father to his rebellious disobedient children, by removing every obstacle which law and justice threw in the way. Being a prophet, he does away every impedient in the creature, by giving it a true understanding of its sin and danger, removing its vanity, and bringing it again to that state of friendship with its gracious Creator from which it had fallen; and being possessed of all perfection, he is constituted a King, to take the management, direction, defence, and final salvation of all these persons on himself; and when this end is obtained, then he will lay down this authority; there will be no more occasion for the exercise of these offices, and God, to all eternity, will be all in all.

2. What a source of consolation have Christians in Christ! it is dignified and permanent. The eternal Son of God hath united himself to the persons of men; not only to their nature, by the hypostatical, identical, personal union, of which we have taken notice; but by that

mystical, real, and spiritual union, whereby he becomes the head of this sacred body. He is therefore formed in them, and they are found in him. He is indeed, both by nature and office, the consolation of Israel. So that the Israelite indeed may say, I have a goodly heritage; the King immortal is the husband of my soul, it shall therefore never perish; he hath taken me, a poor vile creature, unto himself, and hath given me an earnest of the eternal inheritance; I am now interested in all his riches, glory, and honour; his love is the joy of my soul; his perfections are the security of my salvation; he hath clothed me with the garment of righteousness; he will not suffer my enemies to prevail over me; my soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

3. The trial, or examination, of ourselves, we may also observe, becomes a very necessary duty, and if impartially performed must be very useful to the improvement of our souls. "The righteous God trieth the heart and the reins," and true Christians will pray—"Examine me, O Lord, and prove; try my veins, and heart." Says the blessed Paul, "Let a man examine himself;" and again, "Examine yourselves; prove your own-selves."

Many powerful reasons appear for the exercise of this duty; as the importance of the soul—the divine image in which it must be renewed—the

divine enjoyments to which it is invited—the busy agency of the devil, the world, and the deceitful lusts of the old man, vigorously operating to prevent it. But for these reasons, and in opposition to these enemies, let a man examine whether he has yet been created anew in Christ Jesus; whether the same mind, motives, and pursuits be in him; whether, in reality, he has any scriptural evidence to conclude that he is a child of God.

4. We may take notice of the difference between the active and slothful Christian. The first takes up his cross, according to the command of Christ, and follows his example: the second pays little attention to either; a few formal common performances satisfy him. The one enters into the spirit and matter of his duties, and rests not till he obtains some satisfaction in the divine presence and favour: the other carelessly loiters in his mind, and thinks there is no necessity of being so urgent; and is sometimes offended to observe others more importunate than himself. The one is deeply exercised with the reality and importance of eternal subjects he is engaged in, and that he may be interested in all the blessings of the incarnation: the other is supinely indifferent, and takes upon trust all he hears of them. But the diligent Christian obtains a full reward; whilst the slothful lives poor, dies doubting, and is scarcely saved, if saved at all.

DISCOURSE V.

SECONDLY; THE HOLY GHOST, EXHIBITING AND APPLYING THE BLESSINGS OF THE INCARNATION.

We have considered, as far as is necessary to our present purpose, the blessings of the incarnation as they are exhibited by the Gospel, both in the evangelical establishments, and the doctrines supported by them. These are blessings to mankind at large; their tendency is to lead the minds and the actions of men into peace and happiness. Even in this present world, supposing there was no other, there are innumerable benefits arising to society from the Gospel and the ordinances of it, as it teaches to live soberly and righteously in all things, in a manner infinitely above every scheme devised. It is worthy of all acceptation by human wisdom, because of the intrinsic worth, and the universal benefits with which it comes recommended to every order or condition of the human race.

But notwithstanding the acknowledged usefulness of the Gospel, arising from the wisdom of the plan, and the goodness of its effects to every rational creature, yet it is inefficient without the power of God accompanying it. It is but an

instrument in his hand, to effect the recovery and salvation of lost sinners; and therefore it is said to be the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth; so that all the ordinances and establishments of it, every doctrine and promise it contains, are nothing without his divine agency. The Spirit of God is the life and virtue of them all; and in administering this, he manifests the sovereignty of his will.

We have before taken notice of this subject in a former discourse, and have just mentioned the agency of the Holy Ghost in the persons of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when he gave such full testimony to the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, immediately after his ascension into heaven. We now propose considering it more largely, and to follow this blessed Agent in his operations on the minds of men, not only in exhibiting, but applying, the blessings of the incarnation, both in a doctrinal and experimental way. Here we enter into the doctrine of

DIVINE AGENCY,

By which the blessed effects of the incarnation of the Son of God are exhibited, and without which his nativity would have been in vain. There is such a necessary connexion subsisting between them, that they cannot be separated. The first, that is the incarnation, is the cause of, and opens the way for, the work of the Holy Ghost, which

is a necessary consequence proceeding from it. If the first be the fountain, the second is the streams flowing from it, which extend themselves, and run in every direction for the benefit of mankind, If the first be the risen, glorious Sun of Righteousness; the second is the beams, dispensing life and joy to every living creature. Hence the cause and the effect in sciences, are not more connected than the incarnation of God the Son, and the agency of God the Spirit.

An agent is a being which has the power of action in itself, and can exert it at any time, and in what manner he pleases. No doubt, all the three divine persons in the Trinity have their distinct agency in the creation of all things, and the preservation and government of all creatures. But it is in the incarnation the peculiar agency of each person is distinctly to be observed: as the Father preparing a body for the Son—"A body hast thou prepared me." The human nature of the Son, in his incarnate state, is prepared by the agency of the Father. The Holy Ghost forms it out of the substance of the blessed Virgin by his overshadowing power. For the angel said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." And the Son assumes the entire human nature thus prepared and formed; "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he

also himself likewise took part of the same." In these texts, we see the agency or active operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in forming the instrument of the new creation; that is, the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The human nature of the eternal Son is that instrument or means, by which he forms all things new in the spiritual nature and state of his people. Being the Mediator of the new covenant, he assumed real and true humanity in the appointed time, and was his Father's agent in all the stages of his humiliation. Hence he was qualified with every grace and virtue, which he as man could enjoy. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and the Spirit was not given by measure unto him. He therefore acted in his Father's name as well as in his own, and by his authority in all the parts of his ministry. And the humanity was the medium through which the divinity manifested itself in all his supernatural works.

It is the divine agency of the Holy Ghost exhibiting the blessings of the incarnation, to which this discourse is devoted; and here we shall take notice of three things in the subject. 1. The nature. 2. The extent. 3. The effects of it. All operating to the glory of Emmanuel, and the happiness of those he came to seek and save.

1. The nature of the agency of the Holy Ghost. We must view this in relation to the great subject

of our illustration, and we shall see the blessed Agent sent, exhibiting such glory and splendor as are peculiar to his divine operations. He is the great illustrator of the incarnation. It is a subject worthy of the eternal Spirit to unfold, explain, and apply; and he only is equal to the full and perfect exhibition of it. All other spiritual agents are inferior to this work; none of them have capacities sufficient to comprehend the nature of so sublime a subject, as God manifest in the flesh, and all the immortal, blessed consequences which follow it. They see and adore the mystery; but so far as we know, have no part in exhibiting or applying the blessings flowing from it. This is a province which the Spirit of Christ occupies himself. As we never have seen any of the angelic spirits employed in revealing the prophecies of the incarnation before it actually took place; so since that blessed event, we have never heard them as ministers, nor seen them as agents, employed in a work of such importance to the divine honour and human happiness. The Holy Ghost is the agent here, and makes use of men to carry the blessings he exhibits to the souls which stand in need of, and do receive them.

Here we see the power of the Spirit of God operating, and manifesting all the amiable, endearing, engaging, captivating graces, which shone forth in the virtuous life of the incarnate Saviour, who is the pattern of all divine and moral excellence. Being sent by the Father and the Son in the same

sense, and for the same purpose, as the Son was sent of the Father; not to be incarnate it is true, but to carry on the whole plan of which the incarnation is a leading principal part; that is, to unfold, illustrate, and apply the benefits procured by it. His agency and operations, therefore, are equally efficacious, where, and upon whom he acts as the incarnation is effectual to reconcile all things in heaven and in earth. Hence to point out the nature of the Spirit's work The blessed Saviour denominates him by the characters of a reprover, a convincer, a guide, an interpreter, a teacher, an advocate, or a comforter; and distinguishes his personality as the Father's gift, sent in the name of the Son; sent by the Son from the Father. To denote, in a particular manner, the nature of his agency, the true Witness calls him repeatedly, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. The truth of his existence, of his personality, and of his unremitting agency, is clearly stated in the following passage. "And when he is come he will reprove the world," (marg. convince, that is by rational argument, as the original word implies) "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. When he, the *Spirit of truth*, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall

hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore, said I, he shall take of mine, and show it unto you."

The Spirit of truth convinces the spirits of men of their errors, the danger of their unrighteous ways, the dreadful nature and consequences of unbelief, and of rejecting the only medium of salvation by the righteousness of the exalted, glorified Son of God: who has judged, condemned, and ruined the father of lies, the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world.

Now he will take you, my apostles, and ministering servants under his own direction; and will lead and guide your minds into the full understanding of all the truth, which I have delivered you. I have but introduced the subjects or matters of truth to you; but he will bring them forward in their fulness, and give you complete understanding of them. He will inform you, in my name, and as my representative will give you the the knowledge of my will respecting all things which you are to believe, and do, and teach through all the ages of time, the same as if I were always personally present with you. He not only receives authority from me, but he exercises it for my honour, and will most certainly, for my sake, lead you into all things that are right and good. The authority, power, and glory, which are essentially

in the Father, in the same way and manner, are in me. These in proper seasons he will exhibit, and make known unto you; so that you shall not be left, like fatherless orphans, without any guidance or protection; but you shall have the Holy Ghost, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, and he shall testify of me.

It is to the agency of the Holy Ghost, we must ascribe those deep and certain impressions made on the minds of men, respecting their spiritual and eternal state. The sleeping, insensible conscience never would, of itself, awake to any serious consideration about the state of the soul, and the awful eternity before it, were it not for the quickening life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost. The word of the Spirit is in demonstration and of power. It is a quick, powerful, searching word. The Spirit which is of God, maketh us know the things that are freely given to us of God. These things the Holy Ghost teacheth, in a way peculiar to the nature of his own divine agency; enabling the object of his care and attention to compare spiritual things with spiritual, that by examining, trying, and proving them, he may attain a satisfying knowledge of the mind of Christ; and particularly of his personal interest in his incarnation, and the infinite blessings of it, which he now clearly sees exhibited, not only in the Gospel, in all the doctines and institutions of it, but in the effusion and operations of the blessed eternal Spirit of truth, given

and sent by the Father, Son, for this very purpose.

The holy prophets of the old dispensation, as well as the blessed apostles of the new, have treated largely on this subject; the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did testify the glory that should follow the sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. And this glory consisted in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who should reveal and manifest the glory of Christ, as the procuring cause of all grace and glory to every redeemed soul. He takes of the things of Christ into his own hands, and exhibits, or holds them up to the view of the poor, guilty, perishing soul. His obedience, blood, and merit, are applied by him to the believer; so that he is enabled to look up with hope and confidence to a throne of grace, and to pray, with the humble devotion of a contrite heart, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me: cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me: restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." This is the sincere, fervent language of the heart, created anew in Christ Jesus, by the agency of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, which is called the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of this subject in plain terms, saying, The Spirit shall be poured on us from on high. I will pour my Spirit on thy

seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.—Jeremiah.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will put my Spirit within you. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.—Ezekiel.

And he shall come down unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.—Hosea.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former rain: a teacher of righteousness (mar.); moderately, according to righteousness (ditto). And he will cause to come down for you the rain; the former rain, and the latter rain. And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. In those days will I pour out my Spirit.—Joel.

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications.—Zechariah.

By this agency a new creation is formed, which illustrates the omnipotency of it. It is wholly spiritual, and therefore mysterious; not within the reach of human comprehension. It transforms the heart (the reins, or the inward parts), and changes the relation of a creature to that of a Chris-

tian. It is holy; hence cleansing, insinuating like small rain in the spring or autumn; diffusive like water sprinkled; and certain in its effects by its immutability, and eternal residence in you. Upon the whole, it is a blessed and happy work of the Lord our God; who, in his divine and spiritual operations, is a teacher of righteousness; he teaches the ignorant saving knowledge, in a way they are able to receive it from degree to degree, moderately as they are are able to bear it; and according to the righteous rules of wisdom and prudence, wherein he hath abounded towards us. The blessed apostles ascribe all the success of their ministry to this agency alone. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and all their faithful successors were only his instruments by whom he performed his work. They are the earthen vessels replenished with his heavenly treasure.

2. The extent of the divine agency. How far it goes cannot be strictly ascertained. Here we are limited in our researches as much as in the nature of it; because we have not capacities sufficient to comprehend either. But though we cannot comprehend the whole, it does not follow that we ought not to investigate, or attempt to illustrate those parts which are within our reach; and endeavour to add to our stock of knowledge by going on, and labouring to make new discoveries, which may tend to our improvement and entertainment. We may make one general observation, which may be con-

sidered as a boundary, beyond which we ought not to pass; and that is, that the Holy Ghost does not extend his operations further than to the limits fixed by infinite wisdom, to the benefits which shall flow from the incarnation: hence the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and the extent of his atonement, are the rule, or measure, of the Spirit's agency: so far it goes, and no further. Neither the one nor the other extends beyond the human race; nor is the Spirit of God given to any for whom the Son of God did not shed his blood, and lay down his life.

There are operations of the Holy Ghost in the material and moral world, which necesarily belong to him as the conservator of all his works: but they are carefully to be distinguished from the agency we now treat of. These are the acts of a Creator, unconnected with any other authority than that which he hath absolutely in himself. In this this there is a delegated authority, under which he acts as it were by a commission, freely and gratuitously, for the honour of the incarnate Son, and the benefit of the elect redeemed by him. Hence it appears that his agency is more than his common influence. The first, is a special benefit of the church of Christ, in which he acts according to the divine will, manifested through him to his body, and to every member of it. The second, is a general blessing to the creature, which may not be related to, or connected with, Christ

the head. His common influence in the works of creation and providence does not amount to his agency in the œconomy of grace; but the agency includes his influence. The first is the cause of the last, as it relates to believers. There are saving, and there are common influences; and both the operation of the same Agent. The first flows from the incarnation, as the only proper cause of them: the second, from the moral perfections of this divine person, who necessarily acts upon, and influences, all rational creatures to perform things right and good.

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all. He divideth to every man severally as he will. The will of the Holy Ghost is the will of Christ essentially considered: and the Spirit manifests Christ to every man in the general ministry of the Gospel, and in all the miraculous gifts with which the ministers of it were endowed. The doctrine of Christ enlightens the mind; and this is a heavenly gift, which the soul tastes a certain sweetness and pleasure in; being a partaker of the common influence of the Holy Ghost, who bears witness to the truth. It tastes the goodness of the word of God, and feels powerful, but tempory, impressions of the invisible eternal state. How far natural operations of this kind may go we cannot tell; but they are manifest in the case of all apostates who have taken up the profession of faith, but like the temporary hearers

of the word, desert it in a time of danger or persecution; or like the foolish virgins, who carried their lamps to meet the bridegroom, but had no oil with which to trim them, when he made his approach. When these knock and say, Lord, Lord, open to us; he will say, depart, I never knew you. To such the agency of the Holy Ghost has never extended; therefore they went out from us, because they were not of us, as the beloved disciple expresses it.

Notwithstanding this solemn and awful truth, that the divine Agency never was, nor ever can be, applied to final apostates; yet the Holy Ghost goes forward in, and with the word of truth universally, and makes it the means of life and salvation to all whose names are written in the book of life, even to all the ends of the earth. Thus we are assured, that all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord. All nations are to be taught and baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They are to be instructed in the commandments and ordinances of the incarnate Saviour; and he assures his ministers that he will be with them always: his divine presence shall be with them through all generations, even unto the end of the world. The Holy Ghost is now given to supply his personal absence; and by him he is spiritually present in his church, and with his public servants, and shall continue so throughout the whole of the evange-

lical dispensation, when he shall come, the second time, to make an end of, and finish it.

During the whole of this œconomy, the blessed Spirit of grace extends his gracious powerful agency to raise up, prepare, and send a succession of ministers, in every age and nation, whom he calls, like Barnabas and Saul, to the work for which he hath appointed them. The gifts and grace with which he qualifies them, are bestowed not only for their own salvation, but for the salvation and comfort of those that do, or shall believe by their means on the Son of God, as he is manifested in the flesh. These men are the instruments of his work; by them he exhibits the divine person, and finished work of the incarnate Redeemer, to a lost and wretched world; he therefore gives them wisdom suitable to the station he places them in; fits them for their work, and supports them in it. It is not they, but the Spirit of Christ which speaks in, and by them, when they perform the office of an ambassador for Christ. The greatest of preachers are nothing of themselves, and can be of no benefit to the souls of men, but as they are the instruments of his agency. But whom he calls and sends, he will not forsake, nor leave, without some degrees of success; either for the conversion of sinners; the edi-edification of saints; or the condemnation of the impenitent. Hence, with the apostles, and the evangelists themselves, and all the first ministers of

Christ, they may, with humble satisfaction, say, "Now thanks be to God, who causeth us always to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."

Whatever distinction it pleases God to make, with regard to the persons of men, in the extent of his divine agency, which supports the Gospel, and the ministry of it, wherever the blessings of the incarnation are exhibited: it is certain it extends to the whole person of every true and sincere believer. The soul, body, and spirit enjoy the benefits of it: the Holy Ghost sanctifies the whole man. The child of God is distinguished from the man of the world; the believer from the infidel; the saint from the sinner; the sons of God from the sons of Belial: and the grand mark of distinction is, that the former are under the agency and influence of the Holy Spirit of Christ, and the latter are not. Hence the difference between one man and another, in the divine account, is illustrated by that which subsists between wheat and tares, corn and chaff, sheep and goats, children and dogs, lambs and lions, and many other contrasts to the same effect.

We add, in the last place, that it extends to the whole church through all time. The agency of the Holy Ghost, is always necessary to the existence and increase of the church: it depends intirely upon

this, both for what it is, and what it must be. No sinner could enjoy any benefit from the incarnation, person, or offices of the Son of God, for the purposes of eternal life, but by the effectual operations of his blessed Spirit. He is the author of every good motion and exercise of the soul, in relation to its returning to, and reliance on, him. He is the promoter and strengthener of all those desires and resolutions, which are excited and formed for an interest in the all-sufficient atonement of a Saviour, and to walk steadfastly in his ways. Here we may observe an uniformity as to the matter of these operations, which invariably flow from, and point to, his divine person, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us: but there is also a diversity as to the manner of them; some persons being very differently affected from others, on a view of the same blessed object. When the blessed Spirit exhibits the justice of God, the purity of the divine law, and the odious nature of sin, as connected with the person of a suffering Saviour; the soul of the guilty creature is filled with fear of the terror of the Lord: he is afraid of his just displeasure and wrath. When he exhibits the divine manifold wisdom, in the wonderful plan of salvation, the mind is filled with an holy and reverend awe; it is constrained to fear and glorify Deity in humanity. When he opens the infinite and unparalelled love of God, as it is manifested in the incarnation, the affections are

drawn with an humble and heavenly delight to embrace such unspeakable amiableness and glory. Every believer, in every age and nation, has an experimental knowledge of these things, though the degrees of it may be very different in different persons. But every one grows from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Hence, as the church on earth loses her members by death, when they are added to the triumphant state of glory in heaven; the agency of the Holy Ghost, by the means of the word, ordinances, and sometimes minute providential circumstances, raises up others, unites them to the body, and they shall also be everlastingly saved.

Thus the Holy Ghost is a sovereign agent operating in the world, calling whom he will, quickening, sanctifying, assisting, and saving them for the glory and honour of the incarnate Son. Not only exhibiting the blessings resulting from his incarnation, but also effectually applying them to his redeemed and blessed body, to the eternal praise of his glory.

3. The effects of this agency. Here we have many glorious subjects; all comprehended in the works of righteousness, and the fruits of the Spirit. Since the memorable day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended in the way and manner which we have seen; his omnipotent agency has been unremitted. He has never left himself without a witness in the earth since the

Son of God ascended to heaven, who should bear testimony of the incarnation, of the truth as it is in Jesus, and of his divine agency, in carrying on the purposes of his grace, through the world, the church, and the souls of men.

The means established by the Head of the church are fully adequate in the hand of the divine Agent, to the end for which they are appointed: they are fit and proper instruments for his work, and shall produce the effect which he intends by them. They cannot fail, when applied by him, to effect the design of their establishment. They shall prosper in the thing whereunto they are sent, because he is is almighty. They shall produce mighty effects, no less certain and substantial than those which nature brings forth in every element, and every season. These may well illustrate those, and accordingly they are often alluded to in the divine oracles for the purposes of illustration: that by the aid of visible familiar objects we may be enabled to ascertain the nature and effects of those which are invisible and eternal.

The operations of the Holy Ghost, as we have said on the blessing of regeneration, are represented under every element; in these, his spiritual nature is illustrated. The effects of them by consequence show us the effects of his divine agency, when he, by the instituted means of salvation, quickens the carnal inactive soul; purifies the heart by faith; cleanses the whole man, as

with the washing of water through the word; and inspires the affections with heavenly, divine joys, which he communicates from the eternal Sun of Righteousness. Here we see deep and effective consideration produced in the cogitative faculty, which, in relation to eternity, was fast asleep, searching and powerful impressions in the soul which effect a saving conversion in its nature, principles, and motions; strong, invincible, immortal effects, which cannot be overthrown; blessed, divine, joyous consequences, which shall never be lost. Hence the Holy Ghost is to the redeemed, spiritual world, what the four elements are to the natural. These material substances, seemingly of different and opposite natures, unite to produce one effect; and that is, the happiness of the human race. So this divine Person, in the exercise of his agency on the elect, though his operations may apparently, to weak mortals, seem to thwart or oppose the design of the incarnation, yet they all tend to the honour of it. When he makes use of the law, it is a terrible weapon, seemingly applied for no other end but to destroy the guilty, miserable offender. This, however, is the most effectual means of humbling the sinner, and killing his pride. If the Gospel be used, it is not in opposition to the fiery indignation of the law, which is effectual to convince and condemn; but in harmony with its design, which is to bring a ruined, wretched soul to the all-powerful Saviour.

The voice of the eternal Pneuma sounds through every part of this silver trumpet; sometimes with a piercing efficacy, like the keen searching north wind; sometimes in a soft, warming, and gentle manner, as the south. If he uses temporal afflictions of various kinds and degrees, which, like water-spouts, break from the dark clouds of Providence, rolling in the heavenly regions, or like waves breaking upon waves, in the boisterous sea of this fluctuating, unsettled world; these, under his divine agency, shall infallibly terminate in the spiritual profit, and immortal advantage, of those who love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

The more unlikely the means are to produce such effects as they manifestly do, the more gloriously they display the powerful agency of the person who makes use of them. Earthen vessels are filled with the heavenly treasure, that the excellency of the power may be of God. These earthen vessels are the ministers of the word, who preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. They are earthen, made of earth; by nature, frail, weak, and frangible; sinful creatures, exposed to instant dissolution. Vessels of a certain construction, of large or small dimensions; of such capacity, as shall answer the purposes of their formation: vessels of quality, of well mixed tempered matter, fit to contain the spiritual divine treasure: of quantity, great or little, according to the office

or department in which it is to be employed. Such are altogether passive, either in receiving or exhibiting the blessings we treat of. My speech and my preaching, saith Paul, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

The blessed Spirit of God, though by virtue of his omnipotent supremacy, is not confined to the instituted means, yet he most generally honours them in his operations on the minds of believers. The preaching of the word; the administration of sacraments; fervent humble prayer; or devout and pious praise; are made effectual under his divine agency to all the purposes of their institution. There is an accepted time, which, by his powerful influence, becomes the day of salvation. Though he may work without means, in exhibiting and applying the blessings of the incarnation; yet it cannot be imagined that he acts contrary to them. Though deep and effectual convictions of sin, and the consequent conversion, faith and obedience, may not be communicated by any particular ordinance, either of a public or private kind; yet the effect invariably is to bring the sinful and miserable creature into the obedience of Christ, and an universal submission to, and use of all appointed means.

Here he demands a constant reliance on him in

the unwearied practice of all religious duties, of a personal and public nature ; they are appointed for our benefit, and we are bound to the use of them to receive his blessing, which we shall not ask in vain.

Thus we have taken notice of the nature, the extent, and the efficacy of the divine agency. We have seen enough to satisfy us that it is infinitely sublime, unspeakably above all comprehension ; that it embraces the whole body of Christ, through every age of time, and every nation of the earth ; and that it effectually applies the blessings flowing from the incarnation, having first exhibited them by the means of Gospel ordinances. We shall conclude with observing, that these operations are carried on, and shall terminate, to the glory of Emmanuel, and the felicity of the redeemed. These two objects are so united in this subject that they cannot be separated. The honour of God, and the happiness of man, constitute the grand design which the Holy Ghost hath in view in all his concern with Christ and Christians. It is to make them of one heart and mind : so that the divine and human will shall be in unison, in nothing thwarting, or opposing each other. The divine will, eternally immutable and unchangeable, becomes the sole director of the human.

If the glory of Christ be the great end of the Spirit's agency, we cannot help seeing, by way of

evident inference, the infinite dignity of his person. This gives a lustre to the apostle's description of him, which, though one of the highest in the whole extent of Revelation, is, notwithstanding, illustrated by the Spirit's agency. He is the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of his person. Now the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven makes, if I may so say, this brightness brighter; causes it to shine with the utmost splendor: not that he adds any thing of intrinsic excellence to the divine perfections of the incarnate Son, which can admit of no increase or improvement; but he exhibits him with greater majesty and glory, opening the eyes of the creature's understanding, that it may see and comprehend him more distinctly, and removing every carnal veil that prevents the most distinct knowledge of him. How great is he in whom all Revelation centres! To whom all prophets, apostles, and sanctified eminent men bear witness! On whom all the glorified angels of heaven attend! And for whom the almighty eternal Spirit of truth exerts his constant agency and influence. The Holy Ghost pours unspeakable glory and honour on his name: it seems the only name to which he pays a special regard: he honours it supremely, therefore, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow. He fills his doctrine with heavenly divine virtue, which spreads abroad the savour of his sweet ointments. He inspires his ministers with holy

fire, that they may flame forth his praises. In short heaven and earth unite, and shall to eternity magnify him.

The agent, we now consider, is the eternal Spirit. The first, the greatest, the best; he hath existence in, of, and from himself. God the Spirit, and Spirit of God. His being is manifest in his operations; his personality in his procession from the Father and the Son; his agency in exhibiting the blessings of the incarnation. If no language can set forth the infinity of such subjects, or unfold the unspeakable nature of the divine agency, either in its extent or effects: how great, glorious, transcendant, and unsearchable, must HE be, for whom the eternal Spirit of holiness, mercy, goodness, and love applies all his divine perfections, and as it were empties himself, that he may be honoured? Creatures must stand mute, lost in wonder and astonishment to behold the self-existent, incomprehensible, almighty Spirit, working for the glory of a person so despised and rejected of men. When they can break silence, it must be in praise; praise to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

This agency is applied for the happiness of miserable and wretched man. This is the next object the Holy Spirit pursues. Souls cannot be restored to their forfeited felicity any other way. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. He turns sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God. It is his work to effect the indispensable

and necessary change. He translates them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love; that they may enjoy the happiness of his peaceful, heavenly government.

It is a great blessing, under a sense of misery, to be directed and conducted to one, who can make us as spiritually happy as we desire to be; it is greater to be personally interested in him, who can heal all our diseases, and restore our health: but it is the greatest of all to be one with him in the way and manner which we have before explained. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. The Spirit of Christ which is in the believer, by his divine, special, sanctifying, and saving influence, hath effected this union, and by virtue of it, he is now in a happy state not to be changed; enjoys happy privileges not to be lost; and shall consequently be happy for ever.

DISCOURSE VI.

The Blessings of the Divine Agency.

Our incarnate Saviour informed his disciples, a few hours before he was apprehended, that it was expedient for him to leave them; because, said he, if I go not away, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, will not come unto you. Hence we may be assured, that if he did not come, the purposes

of his incarnation could not be carried on in that manner most conducive to their advantage. We may refer to David and Solomon, for an illustration of this expediency. The first, out of the abundance of his wealth, laid up great store of gold, silver, brass, iron, &c. for building the typical house of God; but it was expedient that he should go away by death, before the second could begin his work. David's riches were the fruit of his many and remarkable victories; but notwithstanding he had consecrated them to the most sacred service under heaven, he must not apply them personally to the purposes of their dedication, because he had shed much blood. His departure therefore must take place, that Solomon may apply all this abundant treasure to the use for which it is appointed. Even so Jesus Christ, David's great antitype, after he had overcome all his enemies, and acquired immortal honour, must go away, or ascend into heaven. It was expedient, and indispensably necessary, that the incarnate Son should be exalted to the right hand of the Father, that the Holy Ghost might come to accomplish the design of his life and death. He had in his life subdued the powers of darkness, and in his death destroyed the guilt of sin, the cause of misery and death. Now the Spirit of truth takes the riches of Christ, and exhibits them to the souls of men. He opens and brings forward the infinite store of golden divinity in his incarnate deity; the abundance of beautiful, silver-shining

doctrines inculcated in his ministry; bright and burnished miracles, astonishingly splendid to all beholders; strong irreproachable morals, which all his adversaries acknowledged and felt the force of. The virtue and efficacy of all this treasure cannot be calculated by angels or men. The divine Agent we have spoken of, only knows the worth and use of the whole, and he applies it to the vessels of mercy before appointed to glory.

The Holy Ghost influences the minds of men to join themselves to the Lord, when he exhibits him in all the divinity, dignity, and glory of his person; every way qualified to procure, to give, and secure that immortality, glory, and honour brought to light by the Gospel. In order to this, he opens to the soul the wide and boundless prospects of eternal duration, as far as it is able to comprehend them; illustrates the truth of its immortality, from the incarnation of the eternal God in the person of the Son; and convinces the never-dying creature of the indispensable necessity of embracing this hope of eternal life, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

The blessings flowing from the divine agency of the Holy Ghost, which we wish to point out in this discourse, are those excellent virtues, formed and found in believers, denominated the fruit of the Spirit by the apostle Paul. To introduce these we may, once more, take notice of the subjects to whom they are administered; and then speak of

them particularly, as they flow from the eternal source of all fulness, goodness, mercy and truth.

I. The subjects to whom the blessings of the divine agency are administered. Having pointed out these on former occasions, in various respects, or in different views, as our illustrations made necessary, we shall be brief in our present exhibition of them; and only take some further notice of the immortality of the soul, as it is connected with the incarnation. Spiritual agency implies immortality, especially in the divine person of the Holy Ghost, who being God, hath immortality, dwelling in light. But the subjects on whom he acts, have not immortality by nature, but by gift. This immortality is fully illustrated, yea clearly demonstrated by the incarnation. We have before said, that it would be unworthy of the divine perfections to be at so much expense, and to be so particularly careful of a creature, which could at any future period lose its existence. The incarnate Son of God himself gives us the demonstration we refer to, in his own declarations of the certainty of an eternal, immortal state. To which we may add, the apostle's improvements of the subject, and the Holy Spirit's applications of it.

An eternal state intimates immortal subjects who enjoy it: the one cannot subsist without the other. An house is built for the sake of the inhabitant, and a state is formed for the advantage of those subjects who are to enjoy it. The gracious state of grace, into

which believers are brought by the Holy Ghost, is preparative to the eternal state of glory, brought to light by the Gospel. The incarnate Redeemer opens not only all mysteries of divine truth, hid in symbols and ceremonies from the foundation of the world; but he brings to light spiritual, eternal subjects, and a state of infinite perfection suited to them. All these are immortal, and not liable to decay or death. Those for whom this state is prepared, must in the nature of things be equal at least, or superior in nature and duration to any circumstances in which it can be placed. The blessed Saviour seemed to act under the force of this argument, when he made the following declarations. The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. The water that I shall give him, shall be in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.

Eternal life is the doctrine revealed in the Scriptures, and it is a principal exercise of the divine life to search for those truths contained in them, which are suited to the nature of a spiritual, immortal creature, and will give that satisfaction which endureth unto everlasting life. Labour not,

therefore, saith our blessed Lord, for perishing, but for immortal meat. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. Thou hast the words of eternal life, saith Peter. The Author of life saith, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. He that hath his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

This is the argument on which the eternal Son of God founds his last intercessory prayer. He lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

These declarations, from the lips of infallible veracity, afford more full demonstration to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, than all the corollaries, deductions, or inferences that can be drawn by philosophy, and rational argument, from the existence of being, or the nature of things. It is to be remarked, that what the incarnate Saviour

hath declared so fully in all these, and many such passages which might be introduced, respect individual persons, composing the whole body of those subjects to whom the blessings of the divine agency are administered. Each of these persons are equally privileged in this immortal subject: believers are not only capable of eternal existence, with all other descendants of Adam, but they are also qualified for glory, honour, immortality, eternal life, by the special favour of the eternal Father, through the incarnate Son. Let us attend to his own words on this head, wherein he declares to his disciples, in his last interview with them: because I live, ye shall live also. I live, because I have essence, existence, and life in myself, absolutely, and independently. I came to give you life, who were dead in sin, and condemned in guilt; and ye live by virtue of my coming to redeem and save you. Your forfeited lives being restored, shall henceforth be preserved; and ye shall live while I live. Your lives and enjoyments are as dear to me as my own; and while I am the living head, ye shall be my living members also.

These are the faithful and infallible declarations of him who only hath immortality, dwelling in light, concerning the subjects of his grace; and, upon the whole, we may conclude, that there is no article of divine revelation more fully established, more clearly illustrated, or more certainly

confirmed, than that of the soul's immortality. The proof of it is incontestible, when we look at the person of the Son of God in humanity, labouring for its salvation: hear his declarations concerning the everlasting, or eternal existence of it in happiness or misery; and see religion, and all the august solemnities of its divine institutions, in the ministers and ordinances of it, set up, promoted, and blessed, for the avowed purpose of making the whole man eternally happy. Here is proof, that the greatest enemies of God and man cannot invalidate. It is founded on matters of fact, which all the subjects of satan's empire cannot overthrow; and the fact is, the incarnation, and every act, effect, or consequence of it.

Thus we see the infinite value of the soul: one soul is of greater importance than a universe. This shall be rolled together as a scroll; and shall vanish away like smoke; but that shall endure like its Creator and Redeemer; and its years shall have no end. O then, "What shall a man be profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his soul; or what can he give in exchange for his soul?"

The immortality of the soul, is a subject on which the blessed apostles of Christ seem to speak with peculiar elevation. They knew perfectly, by the teaching of the eternal Spirit, that their ascended Lord was exalted for evermore, that death had no more dominion over him; and that all his re-

deemed, body the church, shall also live in eternal glory with him. Under such happy views, they labour to improve the doctrine of life and immortality now brought to light, by the Light of the world. They proclaim him to be the Author of eternal salvation. That he hath obtained eternal redemption for us. That he hath promised an eternal inheritance, which is no less than a kingdom that cannot be moved; either by the force of inimical arms, or by the length of all-devouring time. They assure us of an ordination to eternal life: and declare that this is the pure gift of God; and reigns in righteousness through Jesus Christ: and that believers are made heirs of God and Christ, according to the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. God called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. And our light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. He hath given us everlasting consolation. A joy unspeakable, and full of glory. An inheritance incorrupted, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The beloved disciple seems to have more seraphic views of immortality than any other of his brethren, and therefore he speaks more frequently and warmly of it. He uses the words eternal life very commonly in his writings. The souls of men, and eternal life, were subjects which lay in his warmest affections; his whole soul was engaged and employed in them; his enlightened mind

soared, like the eagle, above the little things of time, to those great immortal subjects of eternity, which were worthy of a spirit so nearly related, and so like to the incarnate Son of God himself. We show unto you, he says, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. And this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life. And this is the record that God hath given to us, eternal life; and this life is in his Son. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Notwithstanding such plain declarations, and animated improvements of them (a few of which we have exhibited), yet the immortal subjects to whom they are addressed, and who are immediately concerned in them, slight them as if they were falsities, or reject them as impositions, till the Holy Ghost, the blessed Spirit of Christ, applies his words to the ignorant, rebellious soul.

The fallen, depraved creature, although strictly and properly immortal, has no thought or reflection on this distinguishing character of his nature. Eternity is to him a dream, if it at all comes into his thoughts. That awful endless duration, for which he is created, he thinks nothing of. But the quickening, life-giving Spirit of Jesus, opens

the eyes of his understanding, and sets before him a certain, clear, and astonishing prospect of the world to come: convinces him that he is an heir of eternal misery by sin, being destitute of every qualification for the enjoyment of God, and communion with the happy assembly of the glorified. He hears the reproofs of his Convincer with the terrors of eternal condemnation; he believes and confesses with ready assent, that the wrath and indignation of the almighty Creator is now prepared to be inflicted on him: his awakened immortal powers are deeply affected with a view of the unspeakable miseries, which must inevitably follow a rejection from God. How do these words, depart ye cursed, alarm and torment the soul. It is to depart for ever, never to return; in a state of woeful wretchedness, never to be altered; into everlasting fire, and unquenchable flames, never to be extinguished; condemned to be the companions of the damned to all eternity; the punishment prepared for immortal devils is to be the lot of reprobate souls, time immeasurable, incalculable, eternal. How does the knowledge of this rack the mind, when the almighty eternal Spirit sets eternity in full prospect before it. The poor trembling creature may then cry out, in the agonies of despair, Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? This is an awful, overpowering consideration, almost too weighty for the feeble creature to bear;

but he who opens the view supports the person surveying it, and enables him to look fully into it, that by seeing eternity, and understanding the meaning of the word, that it is endless, unceasing, or immortal existence; and by knowing himself altogether disqualified for any happy enjoyment in that future state; he may instantly turn to, and embrace him who is the Author of eternal salvation; and particularly cleave to him in whose hand he is; fervently entreating, that he may be delivered from the wrath to come, and may be qualified for the eternal glory that is to be revealed.

The Holy Spirit thus paves the way for a close application of the declarations of Jesus Christ, respecting the certainty of an eternal future state; and of those improving illustrations of it, which we have seen in the epistles of the holy apostles. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts: therefore the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you.

It is indispensably necessary, that an immortal creature should know that it is immortal, in order that it may be effectually prepared to receive, and cordially embrace, those blessings which can make it eternally happy. There are multitudes of men who know nothing of this subject; but notwithstanding it is the grand distinction between them, and all other creatures. Man, till he knows that he is an immortal creature, associates himself with, and acts the part of those who are led by instinct without reason, and are guided by their senses without

reflection. But make him sensible that he has a being beyond time, an inheritance on the other side of the grave, an habitation eternal in the heavens, and he will, like the prodigal, awake, arise, consider, resolve, and act consistently with his immortal nature, and these views of it.

Nor is it less necessary that he should know his real state before God, and how unfit he is for those everlasting enjoyments which are prepared in heaven. When a competent knowledge of the whole is administered by the blessed agency of the divine Spirit, through the usual channel of information, then the immortal soul knows, by experience, that it is a poor, wretched, miserable, and blind creature in itself, and must remain so to all eternity, if rich and sovereign mercy does not interpose.

These are the subjects to whom the blessings of the divine agency are administered:—to helpless immortals, sunk in sin and guilt, ignorant of eternity, and unacquainted with themselves; blind and insensible till quickened by the Holy Ghost. Then he takes them under his own operation and influence, and blesses them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

II. The blessing arisings from this agency are those excellent virtues formed and found in believers, which are the fruit of the Spirit. They are the effects of his operations on the soul; the evidences of regeneration, justification, and sanctification; and are by Jesus Christ unto the glory

and praise of God. The holy apostles open and illustrate the blessed influences of the divine Spirit, as fully as they set forth the person and atonement of Jesus Christ. Our blessed Lord refers to this in his parable of the vine, when he says, I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh way; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Here we have a clear distinction between those, who enjoy the blessings we treat of, and those who do not. The leaves of an outward and respectable profession are not undeniable proofs of the fruit of the Spirit: those may be where these are not, as we see in the barren fig tree.

The excellent virtues, or the fruit of the Spirit, are indispensably necessary to the eternal happiness of immortal souls. Hence we are assured, that except a real, personal change takes place in the spiritual, moral, and relative state of man; that is, of every man; he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God. This change is spiritual, as we have illustrated at large; the fruits of the Spirit are also spiritual, they are purer in nature than the spirits of men, who are defiled by sin. They constitute the real riches and glory of those who enjoy them; and are illustrations from heaven itself of the infinite value and excellency of the precious soul, and of the more precious blood by which it is redeemed.

The blessings we speak of are those divine, pure, and holy principles implanted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. These are implanted, imparted, or communicated as seed sown in the good ground, and which grow, and men know not how. Implanting or sowing these seeds of truth, is equally necessary to the purifying and enriching of our nature, as the imputing of the righteousness of the incarnate Saviour for the justification of our persons. If, without the imputation of Christ's obedience, sinners cannot be entitled to the blessings before us; so, without a title founded on this, they cannot enjoy those heavenly, immortal, most excellent virtues, which are denominated the fruit of the Spirit. But they must be implanted, that they may grow and bring forth their fruit.

We have many eminent descriptions of this important subject: the first, delineated in the person and character of our blessed Lord, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, and by which he was truly holy, harmless, and undefiled; for beauty, excellency, and fruitfulness, he was like the apple tree among the trees of the wood. His shadow was delightful to his beloved desciples, and his fruit was sweet unto their taste. The fruit of the Spirit was full on this plant of renown.

Our blessed Lord begins his ministry with a minute description of these fruits. He states them in the first part of his sermon on the Mount, and pronounces blessings on each fruit according to its

nature and degree. He frequently, in the course of his ministry, alludes to them, as those qualifications which should make their possessors happy. The apostle Paul gives a short but comprehensive description of them to the Galatians, in the last part of his epistle to that people. He states them in contrast to the manifest works of the flesh, which disqualify, and consequently shall exclude the workers of iniquity from the kingdom of God. But he defines the fruit of the Spirit to be—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Each of these constitute a part of this fruit, of which the Holy Ghost is the author: and where it is found in the life and conversation, growing and improving to greater usefulness, there we see the persons in whom the Spirit of God dwells: they live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit.

Love is the first part of this fruit. It is, doubtless, the love of God in Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. He is the agent who implants this immortal seed in the affections, which he hath prepared for it. He hath cleared these of their carnal, sensual objects, and cast them out of the heart as weeds to be destroyed; and now communicates that love which flows from the eternal fountain, through the medium of the incarnation, and is the cause of every good word and work in us. From hence arises the second part of this fruit, which is joy; gladness; a sweet enjoy-

ment of the soul, arising from what it hath experienced by the operation of the Spirit, in regeneration, union, and communion with Christ; and what it hopes and longs for in the eternal mansions of glory. It is called the joy of the Holy Ghost, because he is the author and promoter of it. This produces a third part, that is, peace; tranquility of mind on a stable foundation; peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have now received the atonement: peace of conscience, arising from the complete satisfaction accepted in heaven for sinners. From hence arises that peaceable temper of mind which the Holy Ghost imparts to the believer, and is the cause of happiness to mankind. A fourth part of this fruit is long-suffering, or patient fortitude, under the manifold sorrows of this life: here we observe the Spirit supporting the believer amidst all the trials of this mortal state: for, supported by his agency, tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. This love teacheth us to exercise long forbearance toward those who have affronted, or injured us.

Gentleness is a fifth part of this fruit; it is affability, a disposition for doing good; an open, winning, engaging behaviour, which sweetens all the steps and actions of life, and makes the Christian a blessing in the church, to his family, and the

world. The original word signifies usefulness, mercy and kindness, as well as gentleness; and intimates doing good with both hands, or giving from the hand of charity into the hand of the needy.

The sixth part of it is goodness: here we see the good man, who out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and all the good works which he performs in the fear of God, before the world. Our holy apostle prays fervently for his brethren at Rome, under the persuasion that they were full of goodness: that the God of hope may fill them with all joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And for the Thessalonians. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence goodness, as it grows in the believer, is the production of the Holy Ghost, a fruit of the Spirit that shall not wither.

A seventh part of the fruit of the Spirit, as stated by our apostle, is faith; which is distinguished here from that faith, which is the instrument of our justification and complete salvation. This is a fruit growing upon that tree, called faith by a figure of speech frequently used in the Scripture, which puts

the effect for the cause, or the cause for the effect; as the Gospel is called the power of God, that is, the instrument by which he exerts and displays his power in the conversion of souls:—victory over the world is called faith; because faith is the means of obtaining it; so here it signifies the effect of justifying and saving faith, and is a moral virtue growing out of divine grace, and means fidelity, justice, and honesty in what we profess and promise to others; fidelity in all trusts committed to us, whether of God or man; justice in the use and exercise of that trust; and honesty in the complete accomplishment of it; all arising from faith in Christ, or a full reliance on his divine person, effected by the agency and operation of his eternal Spirit.

Meekness is an eighth part of this fruit. It is a virtue which sheds a dignity and lustre on all the Christian character, and as a fruit of the Spirit ennobles all the other parts. In this we see a pleasantness which engages our affections in a powerful manner, and taste a sweetness which no other fruit can give.

As a fruit of the Spirit, meekness is to be distinguished from that mild, gentle, tame disposition, which men who know not God, and have no faith in Christ frequently manifest. These amiable members of society deceive themselves, if they suppose they have any of the fruits of the Spirit, without faith in, and union with Christ. In him all the Christian's fruit is found, radically, and all

comes from him by the communication of his Spirit. Human meekness is very different from the meekness of the Son of God; the one grows in the unrenewed, natural soil, and in the esteem of the great Husbandman is not a fruit of any value; because it is neither implanted nor improved by the hand of the Spirit. But the other proceeds from him who is meekness itself, and invites all without exception to learn of him, because he is meek and lowly of heart: by learning of him, the man Moses was very meek, and all Christians have the same meekness, by the same means, and for the same end.

This is a fruit which bears many blasts from many quarters, without gainsaying or the desire of revenge; it is nearly connected with that charity that suffereth long and is kind.

The ninth, and last part of this fruit is temperance; that is, moderation, sobriety, continence. It includes the whole doctrine of morality, and intimates bridling and subduing the sensual appetites by force. It is a regular government of our passions as well as our appetites, that we may be prevented from going into any excess in the pursuit and use of earthly enjoyments. Temperance is that exercise both of mind and body, whereby the Christian mortifies his members which are upon the earth. It is that self-denial required by our blessed Lord in all his followers; it is denying all ungodliness as taught by the Gospel.

Thus we see the happy effects of the divine agency on those immortal subjects for whom the eternal Son of God was incarnate. The seed of God is planted or sown in the broken heart and contrite Spirit. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, willingly, with pleasure and satisfaction, which he did in his former ignorance; and the reason is, for his seed remaineth in him; it is sown and hid in his heart; it operateth and worketh unto eternal life; it groweth and bringeth forth fruit unto God; and he cannot sin with design to offend God, or injure his neighbour; because he is born of God. The law of divine and brotherly love is written on the fleshly tables of his heart. Hence we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not, because the Spirit of the living God abideth in him, and strengthens every heavenly grace and virtuous gift, which his own right hand hath planted. The pure, spiritual, holy, and immortal principles imparted to the soul by the Holy Ghost, called the seed of God by the apostle John, cannot die because they are of God. They must certainly bring forth fruit meet, or suitable, to a true and sincere repentance.

These excellent virtues, formed in believers by the eternal Spirit, called fruit, intimate that they are sound, satisfying, substantial, and pleasant. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. They are sound and true,

sincere and solid; being founded and supported in sound wisdom, they constitute, and form a sound mind. Sound doctrine, or the truth as it is in Jesus, is the foundation of a sound faith; and from hence arises sound speech, which is a good conversation, that cannot be condemned. The good man is satisfied from himself; he has a sufficiency in himself, being possessed of the fruits of righteousness, which are in his righteous Lord and Redeemer; and of the righteous principles, which, by the agency of the divine Spirit, sanctify the dispositions of his soul. He is abundantly satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, and often exclaims, O how great is his goodness! There is a substance in these divine fruits; and therefore they are the food and nourishment of those in whom they are found. This heavenly provision, I need but say, is divinely sweet; sweeter than the honeycomb. All the pleasures of sense can never come up to those spiritual enjoyments, which believers live upon in the house and at the table of Emmanuel.

There are such peculiar excellencies in these fruits, that time fails me to point them all out minutely; but shall once more observe, that they constitute the riches, the beauty, and the glory of the soul.

These divine, pure, and holy principles constitute the spiritual riches of the believer. They flow from the unsearchable fulness of grace in the incarnate Son of God. For ye know the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And out of his fulness have we all received and grace for grace. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, gives the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: that ye may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. That he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. The first part of the epistle to the Ephesians, particularly opens and illustrates this subject. The apostle's views and descriptions of it, are peculiarly elevated and animating. He takes special notice of the agency of the Spirit, and the blessed effects of it, in the three first chapters: and the fruit of the whole is, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

They are the beauty and ornaments of the persons who are possessed of them: the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is of great value in the sight of God, saith the apostle Peter.

Be clothed with humility, because God giveth grace to the humble, saith the same apostle. Nor is there any virtue or excellency in the heavenly character more highly commended than this lovely principle. Humility seems the most amiable and engaging of all the beauties of holiness. It is the beauty of the divine character, gloriously exemplified in the life and conversation of Jesus Christ;

affectionately inculcated in his doctrine; zealously recommended by prophets and apostles; and personally communicated by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

In possession of all the beauteous graces, which the Spirit of Christ communicates to the heirs of glory, they are all glorious within; they are comely in the comeliness which he hath put upon them; they are beautiful in the beauty of the Son of God, who, in every view or consideration of him, is altogether lovely. Nor is there a fruit of the Spirit, a gracious principle, or a beautiful virtue in the incarnate Saviour, which distinguished him as man and Mediator, but shall also be found in all the members of his body, the church. They are all found in each believer, as to the matter of them; although they may be in very different degrees: for as one star differeth from another star in glory, and one minister from another in gifts, so Christians differ one from another in their degrees of grace: but children in the divine family have the reality of every fruit of the Spirit, as truly as the most experienced father. Hence the exhortation, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On a view of the whole, how great is the glory of the soul, so enriched and beautified with all divine qualifications! How high the honour to which it is exalted! It rises from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. How sublime the feli-

city which it now enjoys, being of the same nature of that which the exalted Saviour possesses, and which reigns in heaven. It is high, sublime glory, surpassing that of all creatures. The overpowering splendour of light; the astonishing grandeur of riches; the amazing lustre of unnumbered jewels; the sparkling diamonds of imperial crowns; yea, the combined glories of nature, polished with all the assiduity of art, and centering in one blazing focus, fall infinitely short of the glory of that soul united to the incarnate Son of God, and filled with all his fulness of unsearchable riches, communicated by the eternal Spirit, for the eternal glory and happiness of this immortal creature. All created excellencies that can be found in nature, however high and sublime in human estimation, shall wither and die away, and be lost in darkness as if they never had been. But the glories of the divine nature, of which the redeemed soul hath been made a partaker, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the active useful creature as the stars forever and ever.

We must also add, that these blessings of the divine agency make those absolutely necessary and suitable qualifications, which are requisite to meet death with courage; to stand in the judgment without dismay; and to enter the heavenly country with triumph. A title to the inheritance of the saints in light, must have a corresponding meetness for the enjoyment of it. Hence the work

of the Spirit, in the sanctification of our souls, is equally necessary to our happiness, as the atonement of the Son of God in our nature, to acquire and secure our title to all these riches, beauty, and glory.

Having opened this important subject, as fully as is necessary to our present purpose, we may see upon the whole of it, both the cause and the means, through which the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion, and are restored to the glory, dignity, and felicity they had lost by sin. The cause is the incarnation and consequent atonement of the only begotten Son, who is God from eternity, and becomes man in time. The means are the powerful operations and blessed influences of the Holy Ghost, sanctifying and making effectual all inferior means appointed for this happy end. We see the cause of all offence removed by the first, and every source of misery by the second. All the diseases of the soul are now cured. The unction of the Holy One hath effected a perfect soundness in the whole man. The accepted, sanctified person may cheerfully adopt the sublime language of the holy Psalmist:—Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

We see here also the fullest refutation of the doctrine of self-righteousness. Nothing can be more opposite to the blessings we have exhibited, than the pride of human merit in a fallen, guilty creature. It is this that exalteth itself against God, and openly disavows the incarnation and satisfaction of Christ, together with the agency and influences of his Spirit. The blessed Paul strenuously opposes this in the Jews, and as strongly condemns himself for promoting it, whilst he was of their community. But when converted, he knew the insignificancy of his own, and the value of the righteousness of Christ.

In this divine subject we have the best security for morality. Good works, proceeding from this cause, are materially as well as relatively good; they are acceptable to God, being perfumed with the divine merit of our great High Priest, and are highly beneficial to men. The holy principles implanted by the Holy Spirit produce an holy life and conversation; the best actions of nature are but shameful fruits when contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit. What fruit had ye then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

The last thing we now take notice of, arising from this subject, is the infallible security of eter-

nal happiness to all in whom the fruit of the Spirit is found. "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith: ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Therefore, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Quench not the Spirit," but submit to, and follow his motions in your hearts by the word; because he is "The very God of peace, who shall sanctify you wholly, in your whole spirit, and soul, and body, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things

be in you, and abound, they make you neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

DISCOURSE VII.

THIRDLY; THE BLESSINGS OF THE INCARNATION EXHIBITED AND BROUGHT HOME BY DEATH.

HAVING exhibited some of the leading particulars in that system of divine truth contained in the blessed Gospel of our incarnate Saviour, which make believers wise unto salvation: and having seen the blessed agency of the Holy Ghost in exhibiting and applying the blessings we have spoken of in the two last discourses: we come to the happy consequences of the whole, as they are pointed out, and brought home to the elect and sanctified soul in death; when it is to leave all sin, sorrow, and imperfection behind in this world of woe, and stands ready, at a moment's call, to depart and be for ever with the Lord. The mortal veil of flesh and blood, with which the immortal Spirit hath for many years been clothed, now

begins to wear thin; and notwithstanding it may have been well fabricated, and perhaps highly decorated with the honours, or the gold and silver tassels of time; yet now all must presently fall into the soil from whence they came, and be no more an obstruction to the blessed objects of the soul's warmest affection.

The agency of the blessed Spirit hath been carried on for the destruction and death of sin. Hence this parent of death is personified under the character of the old man, who is to be crucified, and finally put off. The soul, which enjoys the blessings of the incarnation, must bear the cross on which this old man must expire. The mortal body of the believer, is that to which he is fastened; and they are not separated but by death. But when the Spirit of truth pierces the vitals of this unavoidable, tormenting, unbelieving companion; when he destroys the infidelity, vanity, and carnality of this wretched being, and thus subdues all his authority and influence; then the precious soul may assuredly hope for that long wished-for release, which it hath fervently prayed for: when it shall see, with infinite satisfaction, the great mystery of godliness, and enjoy all the blessings of the incarnation.

After opening some personal characters, by which we find this destroyer of mankind described, I shall observe, that death introduces the soul into the full possession of all the blessings flowing from

the incarnation: that it delivers the spiritual, immortal creature from all imperfection, sorrow, and suffering, the fruits of sin: that it transmits the weary labourer, or fatigued traveller, to the enjoyment of God in humanity: and that, upon the whole, the dissolution of the body is the glorification of the soul. I propose comprehending in this discourse all my thoughts on this third part of the subject, and therefore shall be more full in illustrating each of these observations.

I. It is clear to demonstration, that death is the destroyer of mankind: not any of the race of Adam escapes this enemy: he pursues with malicious diligence, and infallibly overtakes young and old, rich and poor; and casts them into the earth with diabolic rage. Like a wolf, he hunts and seizes his prey: and men, like sheep, are laid in the grave; death feeds on them; and their beauty consumes in the grave from their dwelling.

Death is denominated the king of terrors: and terrible it is to a wicked, ungodly man. The reign of death is as terrible as it is universal and visible: there is no eluding the sceptre of this government. Death reigned from Adam to Moses; and from Moses to Christ, who came to destroy him that had the power of death: him who is the murderer from the beginning; who brought sin, the father of death, into existence, and enthroned this king of terrors in his universal dominion over the human race.

The empire of death is extended over the soul as well as the body of man ; and must have been total and eternal, had not the Son of God been incarnate to destroy the works of the devil ; to save the soul and deliver it from the wrath to come; and the body too, in due time, from the grave. It is certain the king of terrors shall be subdued ; and the empire of death shall be destroyed ; for death is swallowed up in victory.

Death may be called a king, because it is the vicegerent of the god of this world : the prince of the power of the air, who ruleth over the children of disobedience. Death hath received his dominion and authority from this usurper ; and wearies not in his depredations on the creatures and the works of God. Satan and sin have armed him with power, and he exercises his instruments and means of cruelty over the minds, bodies, and circumstances of men. He roams at large through this part of the creation, and with gigantic strength pulls down every living creature, and tramples it under his feet. He seems like Goliah the Philistine, to defy the armies of the living God, and proudly boasts of his unsubdued prowess. But he shall reign only for a time.

Long hath the divine patience endured the insults of this infernal monster, and hath seen the havock he hath made, and heard the blasphemies he hath uttered. But the time arrives when he shall be dethroned, shall lose his power and

authority, and no longer be the king of terrors to those who are delivered from sin, and who, through fear of him, were all their life time subject to bondage. Because the Son of God, the Lord of life hath come ; and like David hath mortally wounded, and shall finally destroy him with his own sword : through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, exposed them publickly to heaven and earth, " Triumphing over them," in his shameful painful, ignominious death on the cross. " He hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Death may also be represented, with much propriety, as an officer: the messenger of justice acting under a legal authority ; the authority of the judge of all the earth. The blessed Creator assured our first parents, that as certainly as they sinned, they should assuredly die; and the same just denunciation hath followed every transgressor, and shall do unto the exit of time. Death may, therefore, be viewed as that officer, who arrests and takes into custody every rebel against the divine government; the soul that sinneth it shall die. Hence the propriety of our blessed Saviour's advice ; agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Death is the officer

who casts the criminal into the prison of the grave.

Thus we see the horrors of death, in these personal characters by which it is distinguished in the sacred Scriptures; and exemplified in every profane, unregenerate man. We may take another view of this subject, as it relates to the people of God, that is, to the elect, who believe in, are related to, and united with the Son of God. Though it may be hard to distinguish all the true members of the mystical body of Christ, even at the important period of dissolution; yet it is certain, death separates the righteous from the wicked. All without exception, as we have said, fall by the just and righteous judgment of God in death; and we hear numbers of the redeemed rejoicing, triumphing, and exceedingly exulting in the valley of the shadow of death. This arises from a full assurance of a personal interest in the divine person of the incarnate God, and in all the blessings flowing from his manifestation in human nature.

But all the children of God are not so highly privileged in their departure from an evil world to a glorious eternity; many often hang in doubt of their blessed state, or have but feeble hopes of entering into everlasting rest, till the ministering spirits appointed to conduct them home take them under their happy protection, and bring them safe to heaven.

This is a warfare which concludes every other.

Death is that war in which there is no discharge. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit," neither hath he power in the day of death, either to fly from or to conquer when assaulted. Though it is not in the power of feeble flesh and blood to escape the attacks of death, yet it is a conquered foe, and the weak believer may boldly come on in the day of battle, and sing the hymn of victory adapted to complete conquest—O death! where is thy sting? O grave! or hell! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the srength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian's warfare is now accomplished; the contest, or war, with sin and satan is finished; this last enemy has only to release the immortal, blessed soul from its tottering tabernacle, and hereby manifests, that though clothed in black, is nevertheless the truest, best friend; because

In such circumstances death is but a removal from one place to another, and, therefore, it is called a departure. "The time of my departure," saith Paul, "is at hand." It is going home to the house not made with hands, the mansions afore prepared to dwell in the city that continueth for ever, "Whose builder and maker is God.

Under such happy views, it must be an easy and joyful departure. The redeemed, believing soul departs in peace, from an evil world, an afflicted state, the remains of sin, and all that ever has, or

can disturb its repose, to the full and uninterrupted joys of an eternal home; in the happy enjoyment of the glorious Redeemer, and delightful communion of all the redeemed; enriched with all the excellencies of sanctifying grace; fully qualified for the eternal inheritance of the saints in light. The union between soul and body is now dissolved; it is interrupted for a season; spirit and matter are separated, but they shall meet again in a more glorious manner never to part. In the mean time, the spirit lives in a state of splendor, honour, and felicity: infinitely superior to all mortal conceptions. But the material body is laid down to rest, to sleep in the dust of the earth, as in a bed made ready for it, where it lies in safety, till it be awakened in the morning of the resurrection. And we may well suppose that the glory, activity, and blessedness of the soul, now released from mortality and imperfection, is infinitely more excellent than ever it could enjoy in the body in its most happy and elevated seasons. On the contrary, the body is consigned to the earth, to darkness, and corruptions; a woeful spectacle of the depredations of sin.

Notwithstanding this separation of soul and body, they are both the property of the incarnate Son of God. The whole man belongs to him, and he cannot suffer either to be lost. The soul, which is received into glory on the death of the body, and like Lazarus is carried by angels into the place of happiness, where Abraham, and all the glorified are,

shall be reunited to its own body, and experience an happy change in the resurrection to a glorious spiritual, immortal life, that they may be together forever with the Lord; that they may be the subjects of his eternal kingdom; possess the incorruptible inheritance; and wear the crown of righteousness, of life, and glory that fadeth not away.

Thus we may see, with what propriety the apostle enumerates death among the Christian's privileges; when he says, "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or DEATH, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Death, which is the terror of human nature, and cuts off the heroes of war, as well as the meanest peasant, is become friendly to you. In whatever way and manner it may come, whether by slow incroachments on your health and constitution, or by a sudden or violent assault, it is to you eternal gain. For Christ is your gain, whether in life or death. It is your Father's messenger, sent to bring you to himself, to strip you of mortality, and the defiled improper garments of flesh and blood; and to clothe you with immortality, the beautiful robe of eternal salvation, that you may appear before him with exceeding joy:—it is the harbinger of your approaching Redeemer, sent before him to prepare you for his coming, that you may enjoy the sweet consolations of his grace and favour:—it is the voice of him to whom you are

betrothed, in a sure, immutable, everlasting covenant, to which you have publicly affixed your signature:—behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him; see his hand stretched out to take you to himself, and to convey you to everlasting rest.

Death is the servant of your eternal Saviour, and cannot move, or act, but by his order. He cannot be an enemy to any of the children of God:—his poisoned sting is destroyed:—he has nothing hurtful about him to the believer.

Happy state, to be delivered from spiritual death, and made alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! The Christian's life is hid with Christ in God! His person, his grace, and his consolations, are infallibly secured in him. Christ is his guarantee for the life, and all the blessings of it, which are entrusted to his care. Death therefore cannot be an injury, but an advantage to him, as it unites the immortal creature to the eternal Creator. Happy soul, who on this side the grave can look forward with tranquility, through the dark, deep, melancholy valley, in which it shall meet the last enemy; whose enmity, however, is totally destroyed, with regard to Christ and Christians. He is both authorised, and qualified from heaven to conduct the pious, sanctified, holy spirit, redeemed by the incarnate Son of God, from its clay-built tabernacle, to the splendid mansions of eternal glory. Blessed change from sin and suf-

fering, to full salvation, and immortal happiness. He who hath swallowed up death in victory declares, that the death of his saints is precious in his sight. He is their guide, from the first dawn of life even unto death. They shall live eternally with him, for he is not the God of the dead, that is, of the damned, but of the living.

II. The observations proposed. The first of which is, that death introduces the soul into the full possession of all the blessings of the incarnation. The agency of the Holy Ghost having prepared it for the blessed mansions of heaven, death opens the gates of the eternal palace, that it may enter into the fulness of joy, and partake of all the celestial, divine pleasures at the right hand of God.

The eternal blessings of the glorified state, are but imperfectly known in this mortal life. Eye hath not seen, nor is it possible in the present state that it can see them; they are too brilliant for mortal vision; too glorious for the strongest sight: nor hath ear heard, it is too dull to comprehend all that is revealed, much more what is to be revealed. No human invention can paint, or form an idea of what is in heaven. The place of eternal glory has never been seen by sinful creatures, and has never been described by any of the blessed inhabitants; nor can the human understanding form any just or suitable conjecture concerning it; all is involved in impenetrable darkness and mystery, to the most blessed saint on this side

heaven. The most humble believer cannot see through the veil of flesh and blood, which separates him from the most holy place. When this is taken away and wrapped up in the grave, then shall he see as he is seen, and know as he is known. Now he sees through a glass darkly: the magnifying glass of faith, which he holds with a trembling hand, does not afford him a steady view of the beautiful, endearing objects at which he looks. The opaque glass of the senses, are rather a hinderance than a help to the soul in contemplating the glory and joy set before it.

When the blessed Paul was caught up into paradise, which is the place of glory in the third heavens, he heard unspeakable words, which he tells us it is not lawful (Gr. possible) for a man to utter. It does not seem as if he had any use, either for the glass of faith, or of his mortal senses, at this very important time; these were laid aside for a season to be resumed again. But even this discovery, he tells us, was a partial one, on a comparison of what was to be known; for some years after he says, "We know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

How little do we know of the divine, exalted person of that God-man, to whom our souls are

introduced at death; when we shall see him as he is, we shall know more of him in one personal interview, than we can learn in a generation whilst in the body. He is the first object looked for by every redeemed soul on its entrance into paradise.

What low degrees of experience are the highest we can obtain, of the blessedness of a glorified state, in comparison of what is seen, heard, and enjoyed, immediately on the dissolution of the mortal ties of nature. We have seen, on this side the grave, the visible representatives of the glorified Redeemer: we have seen and handled the sacred mememorials of his broken body, and shed blood: we have heard many eloquent descriptions of his divine person; most condescending attentions, regard, and love for us in his humble state. We have enjoyed much heart-felt satisfaction in his house, worship, and ordinances; in our secret devotions, meditations, and prayers: we have, on various occasions, beheld the eternal Lord of Glory in the beautiful garments of salvation; altogether lovely in his splendid pontificals, wearing the crown of his mediatorial authority, when we have been overcome in wonder, love, and praise. But O, what are all these in their highest degrees, when contrasted with the glory that shall be revealed in us at death, and shall be exhibited before us when conducted into the glorious presence of him who was born of a woman, lived, and died for us; he sees the travail of his

soul with satisfaction, and we see him, with inexpressible joy, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Our capacities are very limited in the present state. The earthen vessel can hold but a small quantity of the celestial wine. The weak eye cannot look fully on the glorious Sun of Righteousness. There is a need be for clouds and vapours, that they may be a screen between us and the overpowering heat and splendor. "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," which are for the trial of your faith. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." At death, the powers of the soul are enlarged; they enjoy full liberty, exercise, and enjoyment; like the child born into a new world, it sees, and hears, and acts in a different manner to what it was capable of in a state of confinement. The understanding being freed from darkness, sees God in Christ, and comprehends, with undeniable certainty, the great mysteries of divine revelation; the Trinity in unity; the incarnation, or the divine nature in the human; the mystical union of the glorious person of Emmanuel, with the persons of poor miserable sinners. All are clearly understood, as soon as viewed by the naked eye of reason, to the eternal joy of the liberated soul. The will, being at full liberty,

must be altogether absorbed in the divine will. It is disentangled from the fetters of prejudice, and joyfully embraces the whole body of divine truth.

How do the sanctified, happy affections cleave to the divine person of the incarnate Saviour! If he was the object of love unseen, and the cause of joy unspeakable, how much more now, when every carnal obstruction is removed; when matter is no more a load upon the spirit. That is left behind for interment with all its affections and lusts: this returns to God, the fountain of love; and all the redeemed are eternally happy here. The spirits of the just made perfect are now with God, the judge of all: Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and an innumerable company of angels, in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, on mount Zion.

The souls of believers are at death, not only introduced into a full and comprehensive knowledge of God, of Christ, and the heavenly glories of the eternal state, but into a full and personal possession of them. All they ever heard in the blessed Gospel, or ever were taught by the Holy Ghost are now realized, infinitely beyond whatever they could have conceived. They are now confirmed in holiness and happiness, like pillars in the heavenly state, to go no more out for ever. The eternal Creator comforts them with the consolations of his favour. The Father embraces them as his dear, elected, adopted children; the Son, as

his purchased people; the Holy Ghost, as his sanctified and holy treasure; and the elect angels rejoice over them as their blessed companions in the eternal work of praise. The incarnation and the infallible eternal blessings, of which it was the procuring effectual cause, doubtless compose the subject of their songs.

The second observation proposed is, that death delivers the spiritual, immortal creature from all imperfection, sorrow, and suffering. Sin, as we have copiously illustrated, is the cause of all human sorrow: but it is chiefly the source of grief to the elect, who know and detest it, even when it prevails against them. While the inward man delights in the law of God, there is another law in the members warring against the law of the mind, and often bringeth it into captivity to the law of sin, which is in the members, and constrains it to exclaim, O wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? There is no satisfactory answer can be given to this question but through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we are made alive unto God. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, but maintain the contest unto death: for sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the curse of the law, but under the blessings of grace.

It is by the light of divine truth the spiritual creature sees its imperfections; it knows it is

far beneath the perfect pattern after which it was created; it knows experimentally that it is not possessed of those suitable degrees of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, in which it is requisite to appear before God: it therefore groans being burdened: groans earnestly, with groanings which cannot be uttered; that manifest clearly a deep and sensible impresssion of mind, arising from imperfections, defects, and weaknesses in our best performed duties. It is not unfrequent to the most sincere and upright saint, that the terrors of the Lord overpower his weak and timorous mind. Fears of the awful wrath of God, and eternal misery, may often seize him, which, for a time, his faith in, and reliance on Christ cannot overcome; temptations of numerous kinds and forms may greatly harrass him; sins committed against light, conscience, and open warning; sins of omission, with respect to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; backslidings and wandering from the Lord, from his worship, and from his people: all these sins, and their effects, may very justly overwhelm the immortal soul on the prospect of death. They are the fruits of imperfection; and whilst on this side heaven, the best are not exempt from assaults and sorrows from these, in various, numerous, and unexpected ways.

The sorrows of the present state, as they respect the world, are nothing to be compared with those which arise from these causes; but when to these

are added a sensible suspension of the divine presence, which they necessarily occasion, and from which arises an horrid darkness and distress of mind by grieving the Holy Spirit; together with the withered decayed state of every grace, which now more particularly ought to be in a growing, lively, vigorous exercise, like the lamps trimmed for the coming of the Bridegroom. When, I say, all these causes are put together, it is no wonder we see many of the dear people of God exceeding sorrowful on the approach of death.

Sorrowful! not with the fears of eternal damnation, for that they know to be impossible; but that they have lived so imperfectly; so much beneath their high and heavenly privileges; so much like the men of the world; and so little to the glory of God, the honour of their incarnate Redeemer, and the benefit of the church. These are some of the causes of the departing Christian's grief.—How needful is it through life that every redeemed soul should watch and pray, that it enter not into temptation.

Many sincere and conscientious Christians may be tempted to think that they have committed the unpardonable sin; that is, the sin against the Holy Ghost; the sin unto death, not to be prayed for. It is to be observed, first of all, that this temptation, most frequently, arises out of the mire of a dark melancholy frame of mind, or bad habit of body, which have nothing at all to do with death and

eternity. But to obviate such grounds of distress to pious minds, it is to be observed also, that this sin cannot be committed ignorantly, for then blaspheming Paul could not have been forgiven; nor inadvertently, for then Peter could not have repented, and wept bitterly. It is an overt act; not against the person of the Father, or the Son, but the person of the Holy Ghost only, as he bears witness of the Son; maliciously ascribing his operations and influence to devils, in opposition to fullest evidence to the contrary. Wilful apostates only can be guilty of this sin; and such as fall into it never have any concern, either of present or future consequences. They sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth; and it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. Now this cannot be the case with those who are in the constant exercise of repentance, or fear they have been guilty of this irremissible offence.

Whatever sorrows or sufferings may affect body or soul, in this present evil world, death is a full and final deliverance from all. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The heavenly race is run, and the prize obtained; no more fears arise from contending enemies. The warfare is ended, and the mighty

weapons of no further use. The war is finished, and there is no more occasion for the Christian armour. The departing spirit may assume the triumphant language of the blessed Paul—"I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Our third observation is, that death transmits the weary labourer, or fatigued traveller, to the enjoyment of God in humanity. The enjoyment of God is the great design which he hath in view in all his dispensations, providences, and promises. The Gospel, and all the ordinances of it, are established for this end; divine providence is exercised for this purpose; and therefore all things, however obscure and dark, or light and prosperous, "Work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose." All the promises of God are in his incarnate Son Jesus Christ; they all centre in him, and applied by him unto the glory of God." It is the enjoyment of God in Christ that makes the promises of the Gospel sweet and precious; "Exceeding great and precious promises are given unto us, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature," which is sweeter than the honey-comb, or wines on the lees well refined.

It is in this divine enjoyment the labouring believer finds renewed strength to work out his salvation; he sees this work is great, and feels his strength is small. The work of repentance, faith, hope, and charity, he knows is constantly incumbent on him; these and every concomitant connected with them, he must labour to keep in constant exercise; he must keep the body under; mortify his members which are on the earth; one part of his work is a striving against foes, that he may overcome them, and prosper all the other parts of it. It is a wrestling against spiritual wickedness, which hath obtained great and powerful influence, both within and all around him; he must watch over himself, and hold fast his profession stedfast unto the end.

As a labourer, he may be often weary in his work, but never of it. The work of God is pleasing and entertaining to his soul, though heavy to his flesh. But he is stedfast and immoveable, being assured that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. He laboureth, and is finally a partaker of the fruits: for God is not unrighteous to forget his work, and labour of love, which he hath showed unto his name.

When he labours in the duties of his calling, whatever it is, it may be a monitor to him of his spiritual work, in which he labours not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.

The constant labours of the Christian life may be comprised in the few following particulars. Reading and meditating in the divine oracles; humble supplication and fervent prayer for the favour and blessing of God on all his endeavours; attending and profiting by the sacred ministry; growing in the knowledge and the grace of Christ; commemorating the incarnate Saviour's dying love; labouring in word and doctrine with his family, and all under his charge; singing and making melody unto the Lord with the Spirit, and understanding also, for all the blessings of life and godliness; especially for all the glorious displays of saving grace manifested in the divine person of Emmanuel. These are duties never to be neglected; labours of constant necessity and usefulness, never to be given up, while health, strength, and life remain. But death terminates all, and brings the weary soul into everlasting rest. The dead in the Lord rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

To perform these duties in a proper manner, what need is there of a comprehensive and distinct knowledge of them? What need for resolution, strength, fortitude, and perseverance, till all are finished? Every day the Christian must labour in them; the duty of the day must be performed; I will even mention the hour; it is of importance not to pass it, or slight it when it is come, either for public or private worship. The last hour will arrive, when no more is to be done.

When the work is ended, the instruments of labour are laid aside: the means are of no more use when death comes to transmit the exercised soul to its incarnate Saviour. The Scriptures, the ministry, sacraments, the communion of saints, prayers, tears of sorrow or joy, trials of ourselves, examinations of our state, graces, or duties, all are no more. It takes an eternal leave of all its dearest, sublunary joys; bids a final farewel to every annoyance; it enters into the unspeakable felicity of its glorious Lord and Master's approbation, expressed in these words—well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

Christians are travellers, and are often fatigued in their journey to the celestial city. They are strangers and pilgrims on earth, travelling through this evil world to a better, that is, an heavenly country. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." Death brings the fatigued and weary soul, to this prepared, happy, holy place; from all the sorrows and afflictions of this life, to the enjoyments of eternal glory.

Like Abraham, the Christian at his conversion left his native country of a fallen and natural state, his father Adam's house, and all his depraved, idolatrous brethren. By the command and call of God, he embraced the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and entered into the obedience of faith, seeking the

heavenly country revealed and made known by the Gospel, that he may enjoy an eternal inheritance in Emmanuel's land, in the enjoyment of the incarnate Word, the eternally glorious god-man Christ Jesus.

Like Jacob, he returns to God from whom he had fled, and brings all his substance of soul, body, and spirit; the persons of as many as he can influence; his riches, treasures. and property; and devotes them to God. Threatening, devouring enemies, like Laban, pursue and overtake him; many dangers through life may alarm him with visible destruction; death, like Esau, may assault him with denunciations of utter ruin, and meet him with awful prognostications of endless woe. But when the fears which followed him are over, through the good providence of God which attended him, this dreadful and most apparent enemy is converted into the warmest, and best friend.

Israel's journey from Egypt to their promised land, may well illustrate the Christian's life in all the fatiguing stages of it. We might point out their dangers and their numerous enemies; their alarming anxieties and wonderful deliverances; their miraculous supplies for so long a journey, and for such a length of time; all which are truly wonderful. But last of all, they arrive at Jordan, and must pass through it. So all true Israelites, who are of the spiritual seed; released from the bondage of sin and slavery, and follow the incarnate Son of

God in the regeneration, travel in a desart, in a sandy, burning soil, where no water is; far around by mountains of fire, and deadly lakes of brimstone, opposed by hateful, malicious enemies. But eventually they go the right way to the proper place, where death opens the passage into the promised rest, which hath long been prepared, and remaining for the people of God.

Here we meet with and see, to our eternal joy, the glorious High Priest of our profession who died for us. It is he, who, by his death, hath opened the way for the ransomed of the Lord, to pass safely from time to eternity. Death, in truth, transmits the weary labourer, or fatigued traveller, into the embraces of God in humanity. His journey is ended, and now he shall rest in the palace, in the presence, and in the love and joy of Emmanuel. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness. Thus we see the blessed death of the righteous: "Blessed," infinitely blessed, "are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Fourth. The dissolution of the body is necessary to the glorification of the soul. The earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. The body is corrupted with sin, and must therefore die.

It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment. It is under the awful sentence of the righteous judge, the holy and blessed Creator. It is his sacred will not to relax any part of the just decree, which consigns dust to dust. It must, therefore, be executed on the body, notwithstanding its near relation to the soul, and its title to the heavenly glory.

The sanctification of the soul cannot preserve the body from death; it is but an earthen vessel, in which the immortal spirit hath been cleansed, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. When all the needful operations are finished, the earthen vessel is laid aside; it retains too much of the defilements of sin, to be fit for that spiritual, glorified state into which the soul is conducted, when separated from the imperfections of fallen, depraved matter.

When the tent of the body, in the course of nature, is taken down, the spiritual inhabitant must leave it; not forever it is true, but for a time, that is, until the end of time: then it shall be raised up again, in a manner suitable to the dignity of the blessed spirit which inhabited it. For it is laid in the grave a natural body; a body of the same nature as the earth in which it is laid: but it is raised a spiritual body; changed into a spiritual nature, capable of immortality as well as the soul.

The most engaging, amiable form that ever

drew the breath of life, in death is a mass of putrefaction and corruption. Abraham was glad to bury his beautiful Sarah out of his sight, after her soul had left her body.

We cannot stay here, either to hear or answer uninteresting questions, why the body is not glorified at the same time with the soul. If it is to be glorified at all, it may be asked, where is the necessity of disgracing it to such a degree, and in such a manner? We may say in general on this subject, that the immediate glorification of the body with the soul, is not a part of that infinitely wise plan of salvation, by the incarnation and death of the Son of God. In this case there would be no death to the elect; and if their bodies did not die, in the way and manner they do, they would not be conformed to the death of Christ, which in all reason they ought to be. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

But the soul is glorified, when the house of this tabernacle is dissolved. It enters into glory immediately, and is conducted by angels, as Lazarus was, into the heavenly regions of eternal peace. The divine Agent, of whom we have spoken, commits them to the guardianship of those ministering spirits, who have been attending upon, and assisting these heirs of salvation, during the whole time of their pilgrimage.

Now the immortal spirit leaves a mortal body.

It immediately opens its eyes on beings like itself, of a spiritual nature; glorious creatures, such as it never saw before. They raise the soul, as Joseph out of the prison, and hasten it into the presence of the eternal king. Leaving, suddenly, the regions of darkness and woe, they presently arrive at the twilight of eternal day: as they go on, the glory increases, and grows into inexpressible splendor. The pearly gates of the celestial city are open continually; they enter, and conduct their precious charge to the throne, where the incarnate Saviour sits. The precious soul enters into his glory, and feels more transport than the happy apostles did on the holy mount. It is glorified with his glory; clothed with splendor and majesty, as a king and priest unto God; put in possession of the mansion prepared for it—an house eternal, an immortal, unchangeable home, in the presence of God and the Lamb, and in the enjoyment of every glorious blessing purchased by his incarnation, life, and death; all illuminated with that light, of which the Son of God is the source and fountain. How great! how glorious! how resplendent the dignity of the redeemed, glorified, happy soul!

DISCOURSE VIII.

FOURTHLY; GLORIFICATION, THE GRANDEST EXHIBITION OF THE INCARNATION.

We have said said that the death of the body is necessary to the glorification of the soul. The soul is now prepared, and adorned with all the beauties of holiness, and fitted to meet, and be eternally united with the Son of God; who is also qualified by his incarnation to hold happy communion with every member of his body. Death has stripped the soul of its mortal robes, and it is washed from all its pollutions, and released from all its sorrows and imperfections. The blessed messengers from heaven take it from the hands of death, and conduct it into the presence of God, and the Lamb, to be glorified, to be clothed with glory, honour, and immortality. Let us sum up this exhibition of the blessings of the incarnation, by a brief description of the place, as it is drawn by the pen of inspiration, in which the glory of God, of Christ, and of souls is displayed: and then observe the exercise of the glorified inhabitants, in relation both to the cause and means of their glorification.

The highest views we can have of heaven, and the blessedness of a glorified state on this side of

the grave, are taken from the visible glories of the present world, as kingdoms, crowns, sceptres, and other ensigns of grandeur and royalty. But the utmost stretch of imagination, and the most sublime descriptions, fall infinitely short of the truth of the heavenly glory.

The most exalted representation we have of the heavenly state, given by the holy apostle John, is taken from the most excellent things known, or esteemed in this life; a city of vast extent, capable of containing many millions of inhabitants, more gloriously illuminated than the light of many suns, such as we know, could make it: enclosed with high and strong walls, built on twelve foundations, in which are twelve gates, three on each side of the true square; these gates of this celestial city are not only faced or adorned, but all built with the most precious stones: the streets and buildings are all of the most pure and burnished gold: the walls inclose a space of twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles: the length of one side is three hundred and seventy-five miles. A golden city of this extent was never heard of among men. Its riches and glory surpass the treasures of the earth.

We hear nothing of inferior metals, however valuable or useful in this life—silver, brass, or iron; polished stone, or immortal cedars, are not named here: these are too coarse, and therefore unworthy to be admitted into this illustration of the

glorified state: it is perfect and complete, suitable to the dignity of the eternal Majesty, which formed and established it: it is a city, planned by the infinite wisdom of God, built by his omnipotent agency; and his residence in it is the glory and felicity of the place: as it is finished in the most divine taste, so none but most perfect characters, washed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, are admitted into it. "There shall, in no wise, enter into it any thing that defileth; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The characters denounced to eternal separation from the presence of the Lord, and glory of his power, can have no hopes of an entrance here; but if it were possible this could be granted, the carnal mind, could have no enjoyment of the place; because it could have no communion with the glorified. An unregenerate soul could not be an inhabitant of this city, because it wants every requisite necessary to the glory and felicity of the blessed company.

In this new Jerusalem, the glorious eternal city of God, we see a river of living water, which takes its rise from the throne of God and the Lamb: on either side of it stand rows of the tree of life, which monthly yield twelve manner of fruits. Here we have abundance of all spiritual blesssings. The various fruits of the tree of life, which is the glorious person of the exalted Redeemer, called also

the bread of life, the influences of his divine grace and Spirit, in far more extensive degrees than can be enjoyed in the earth.—O the unsearchable riches of Christ!

This city, and the glories of it, certainly point out these inexpressible excellencies of the glorified state. The population of it is incalculable. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; certain numbers to express innumerable multitudes. These multitudes, however, are all of one character and disposition of mind; all act from one motive, with one design, performing their different duties, according to their different capacities: every soul of the glorified inhabitants is settled in the place prepared for it, within the true apostolic foundation of immutable eternal truth, gloriously displayed and manifested in the ministry of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, who cemented and confirmed their testimony of Jesus, the incarnate Saviour, with their blood.

The gates of admission into it, built by the hand of omnipotence, these holy men constantly directed the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel to; assuring them, that abundant entrance should be administered; that the ministering servants to the heirs of salvation would most joyfully admit and welcome them to their everlasting home. Though placed in the office of state guardians at the gates of glory, yet stand by when the meanest heir of God, and joint heir with Christ, comes

forward to be an immortal inhabitant in this eternal city.

Life and enjoyment are gloriously secure in this happy place; all fear of every kind and degree, from sin, satan, death, or hell, is eternally excluded; there is no admission for any annoyance; every kind of happiness, which the beneficent Creator ever intended, or which the immortal creature could ever desire, is here enjoyed to the highest degree. The redeemed and blessed soul can wish for no more. Its existence as a creature is secured against all that can endanger it, and all that can make it happy is equally safe; here neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor can thieves break through to steal.

Here the beatitudes are all realized—they were the objects of hope, and were often the sweet subjects of divine enjoyment, though a great way off: but now they are brought near by a full possession of them. The humble children of God are blessed in the kingdom of heaven: they are comforted after all their sorrow: they inherit the immortal inheritance: they are fully satisfied, being filled with eternal joys: they have obtained mercy in the fullest extent, and exercise of it: they now see God reconciled in Christ, to their unspeakable joy: they are the children of God come home to his house, and shall never, to all eternity, be separated from him: they are no more exposed to any kind of evil; but rejoice with exceeding gladness

in God and the Lamb, their exceeding great reward in heaven.

Gold and pearls are only shining dust in this world, but in heaven they are substantial realities: the gold and pearls of the celestial state are not mutable, changeable things, they are substantial glories: far, far above all created substances, by which they may be represented. Thus glorious things arespoken of thee, O city of God.

Having seen the place, let us enter it. It is not so much the visible, splendid glories with which we are now concerned, as the sweet and pleasant exercises of it, and in these we shall see how the glorified exhibit the blessings of the incarnation. It is with humble dread, and the most solemn reverential awe, we should tread this sacred ground. O who is sufficient for these things! What mortal can tell his fellow-mortals what they say, or how they perform the services of the church triumphant. But although it is not possible all can be known; yet we may be allowed to meditate on them, according to the analogy of faith, and express our meditations for mutual consolation. I shall therefore attempt to illustrate this last view of the whole, by pointing out, with all humility and diffidence, 1, The whole heavenly inhabitants magnifying the love which occasioned the incarnation. 2. Exciting each others zeal, to show orth his praises for so humble an act. 3. Ascribing the whole of their felicity and glory for ever

and ever to it. These three subjects—divine love, heavenly zeal, and immortal felicity, may well be supposed to occupy the attention of the glorified in the eternal praises of Emmanuel.

1. The exercise of the whole heavenly inhabitants consists, in a great measure, in praising and magnifying the love which occasioned the incarnation. Love, the eternal love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the unsearchable spring, from whence flows the waters of the river of life. The spirits of the just made perfect, joyfully drink of this living water, which is ever refreshing and animating: it constrains them to show forth the praises of him who opened the course in which these waters run, and brought them to the enjoyment of this flowing stream.

The whole of the glorified assembly, while they were members of the church militant, were necessitated to draw this living, refreshing, immortal water, as out of wells; which often were very deep; so deep, that the water could not be seen at the bottom, because covered with darkness. Many solemn important truths, and particularly concerning the person of the incarnate Son of God, were too deep for the weak eye of reason to comprehend; a weak faith, and languid hope, could not always reach the endearing love of God in this great mystery of godliness. But now each has arrived at the fountain; the open and accessible river, where there is no need of these instru-

ments. Faith, however large and strong, and the most extensive hope, are of no use here: the first is exchanged for the beatific vision, and the second for full fruition and personal enjoyment, infinitely above what the one could see, or the other expect.

Who can unfold what is implied in the fountains of living water, to which the man Christ Jesus leads his redeemed, who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their consciences, and conversations, in the invaluable efficacy of his atoning blood? They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. The desires of their hearts are fully satisfied, to the most boundless enlargement; and the crowning blessing of all is, God that formed and created them; the God of love, who hath redeemed and saved them, speaks comfortably to their hearts, and wipes away all tears from their eyes.

But though faith and hope are superceded, and have no existence, or use in the heavenly state; yet love, the most divine of all virtues, is here most vigorous and powerful: that divine flame communicated from the eternal Father, through his incarnate Son, which enlightened and renewed the whole man in a state of sin and darkness, is now improved and increased to the highest splendor. The immortal, blessed soul, released from every entanglement, and raised to the highest dignity and honour, clearly comprehends the true cause of all its felicity; and is constrained, with the deepest humility and veneration, to ascribe glory, honour,

and praise to sovereign grace. Every member of this most glorious assembly, must feel deeply sensible of its own unworthiness, and that it is wholly owing to the undeserved love of the eternal Creator, that each is what, and where he is. Every saint sees himself the greatest wonder in heaven. We may well imagine the glorified soul exercising itself in profound contemplation.

" How is it, that one of such an evil and perverse disposition, as was manifest in me, could ever be made meet for this place of infinite glory and felicity: that love, which is the unsolicited cause of all existence, is the cause of my salvation. It first formed and made me a creature; then redeemed me, by being implanted into my fallen, polluted nature in the divine person of my exalted head and Saviour. It hath carried me safe through all the snares and destructive evils of time, and brought me into a glorious eternity. He hath healed all my diseases, and cured all the distempers with which I was afflicted. I see fully what I heard of but imperfectly in the mortal state. My whole powers shall for ever be employed in the delightful work of praising and magnifying the unspeakable, unmerited love of him, who willingly descended from his throne of glory; bowed the heavens and came down; and veiled his uncreated glories in the weak and wretched nature of which I am a partaker. I can no more complain of tedious wearisome services, or of cold and languid affections;

nothing can interpose between the dearest object of warmest affections, and the praises I shall ever ascribe to him. O what immortal pleasures do I enjoy in his presence, in the uninterrupted possession of his love for me."

Most certainly, each member of the innumerable assembly, humbly admires, and fervently adores the inexpressible love which gave occasion to the glorious plan, by which he is redeemed from the earth. Open vision excludes all uncertainty, doubt, or uneasy apprehensions; the clearest demonstrations give the fullest assurance; reason here has full and free exercise, and comprehends the divine reason of every act of God towards his creatures; not by way of deduction from the most plain and obvious axioms, but by the most satisfactory knowledge of existing facts: particularly, that the human nature is eternally united to the divine: that the Son of God is really the Son of Man: and that it is through, and in this glorified Person, the essential deity, and eternal perfections of God are to be comprehended. The eternal love of the uncreated Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the principal subject of contemplation, joy, and praise. It gave being, form, and effect to the cause and means of all this glory and felicity.

All the united powers of the redeemed, are not sufficient to exhaust a subject of such infinite magnitude; but we may be assured, all unite their efforts in its praise. The Father's love is clearly

seen in the election of their persons: the love of the Son in their redemption, through the assumption of their nature, and suffering and dying in their stead: the love of the Spirit in applying the fruits, or benefits, of his incarnation, which they exhibit, each for himself, with the highest adoring thankfulness.

The whole heavenly inhabitants are partakers of the undivided love of God: it is their common right, and constant enjoyment. They drink abundantly of the waters of the river of life, and eat plentifully of the fruit of the immortal trees. The loving Father smiles upon, and rejoices in his long lost sons; the tender-hearted, compassionate Saviour leads his redeemed in their exercises; he appears at their head, to direct and animate their hallelujahs; and the eternal Spirit of love exhilarates every soul in the sweetest songs of celestial praise.

2. The blessed, glorified assembly exhibit the incarnation, one with another, as the grand means of all their happiness: they point to the person of their exalted Redeemer, who is the visible object of their highest esteem, and may well be represented exciting each others zeal, in showing forth his praises, for so humble an act. Here we cannot suppose any precepts, or directions, necessary, for their is no ignorance or slothfulness in the place. Every one is constantly prepared, with heart and affections, in proper frame, to engage in the sweet employ. The incarnate Son of God, called by

eminence the Lamb, because of the full atonement made by his blood, is the constant subject of their song.

God and the Lamb intimate the divine and human nature in the one person of the Son. They meditate on his unparalelled love, which induced him to be found in fashion as a man; on his deep sorrows and sufferings; the virtue and efficacy of his life; yea every intention, word, and work of his whole incarnate state; the kind and manner of his death; his offices and their blessed effects, of which they had some happy acquaintance in their mortal state. When they run over these subjects, now so well understood, in a way of contemplation peculiar to themselves, and see, without a veil, the sole cause, and means of their salvation, their affectionate zeal must be enflamed to a degree of extasy, equal, perhaps superior, to that which the heavenly host sung at Bethlehem when he was born.

The mode by which spiritual beings communicate their ideas and sentiments to each other, we know not; but that they do converse, in a way suited to their dignity, we may reasonably believe: for otherwise, the church on earth would be preferable to the heavenly state. It constitutes a principal part of the happiness of the saints here, as well as the human race in general, that there is a full and free communication of minds by the means of language; in the use of which we are partakers of each others joys and sorrows. Nothing of any

importance could be done in religious or civil society, without such a medium; and can we suppose that this means of consolation and joy is wanting in the most blessed state?

Hence, the sleeping of souls, after they leave their bodies, appears to be an absurd sentiment; maintained by wicked men, who, because of their sins, would be glad to have it so: or like atheistical fools, wish and say in their hearts there is no God. But this uncomfortable notion, has no foundation either in reason or revelation. Reason opposes it, as contrary to the spiritual nature of the soul: that which is spiritual, is necessarily active. It is the active, immortal creature, or the spirit of man, which is the principal object of divine attention, even in this world; and is the subject of rewards and punishments in the next. Its exercises here, constitute the formal reason of its happiness hereafter, or otherwise. But to deprive it of action when it leaves the body, till it be reunited again at the resurrection, would rob it of a great part of its happiness. It would be better to remain in the body till the day of judgment; because it is preferable to be in a state of useful action than to be asleep.

Revelation fully opposes this pernicious notion; which we might make appear at large, if it were consistent with our plan—a few thoughts, however, may be admitted. We are assured by the prophet, that each one walks in his upright-

ness; that is, the righteous, whilst their bodies rest in their graves. The inference is, the immortal soul is active, and employed in exercises peculiar to its state, separate from the body. The patriarchs gathered to their fathers, intimate that they were living and active in immortality. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, was not torpid and insensible, but capable of being employed on a message from heaven. The soul of the penitent thief was promised paradise, in company with Christ, the day of his crucifixion; and we have no reason to believe, that the soul of the one went to sleep more than the other. The apostle Paul gives no account of any sleeping in paradise; but saw and heard unutterable things, which made him desirous of departing, that he might join in their more active and perfect exercises. And, lastly, the souls of them who had suffered for Jesus' sake, were under the altar, and are represented crying with a loud voice, which is quite contrary to the notion of sleeping: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; which was, and is, and is to come.

Neither have we any account of the sort of appearance which the soul makes in the glorified state: by what means it exercises itself we cannot tell: but that there is a visible and personal knowledge of one another we cannot doubt. That they are as the angels of God in heaven, we have the testimony of the God of angels. But the mode of

their existence, and manner of their exercises, though the same, and wherein these consist, are not revealed. It would, therefore, be presumption to conjecture, or state any thing on either.

From the personal knowledge which the three disciples had of Moses and Elias on the holy mount, we may with good reason infer, that the blessed inhabitants of the celestial country have a knowledge of each others persons and circumstances. Fathers, who have spent many ages in this happy place, know their sons and descendants, according to the flesh, as they arrive; and sons know their progenitors. Husbands, wives, and children soon meet, and increase each others joys. Useful, valuable ministers presently recognise the happy souls they have been the instruments of bringing from darkness to light; from satan to Christ; and from sin and sorrow to salvation and heaven. Private connexions formed in the spirit of truth, and the love of God, in this fallen state, are here improved to the highest perfection, and consummated with approbation of God and the Lamb.

How great is the felicity, joy, and triumph of these blessed spirits, who have safely escaped all the woes of time, and are united, and infinitely improved, in the closest ties of eternal friendship! Love is the bond of this perfect union. All mortal relationships, arising from the endearing affections of nature, are exchanged for such as are in-

finitely more pure and binding. The whole world of the redeemed turn their most tender, warmest attention to the chief Friend, the nearest and best of their kin; who hath purchased, and prepared, all this glory for them, and gratuitously puts them in possession of it. Their fervent regard must be awakened, on beholding the Man who was born, bled, and died for them, to bring them into this happy state. How are they all enflamed with the warmest zeal for his praise and glory; the most seraphic love to his divine person; and the humblest, adoring thankfulness for such undeserved, but distinguished happiness!

Their zeal is founded on knowledge—experimental knowledge; the knowledge of God in Christ. The visible demonstration of the divine nature, inhabiting the human: the eternal God in his essential perfections, manifested in the Man Christ Jesus; displaying all the blessed relations of infinite love to the happy, glorified multitudes.

The certain, experimental knowledge acquired here, never can be lessened in the degrees of it: it is a growing knowledge to all eternity; because the infinite Eternal is unsearchable in his nature and perfections. All that is known, and enjoyed in heaven, through countless ages, is but a part of what is to be enjoyed. It is no absurd sentiment, that the faculties of the soul grow and expand to eternity, as the divine persons, works, and ways of

God are laid open, and made manifest; particularly the wonderous plan of the incarnation, with the eternal wonders of grace and glory flowing from it. The whole body of the redeemed, may therefore be well supposed to excite, and animate each other, in showing forth the well-deserved praises of him, who hath so loved them, and washed them from their sins in the meritorious fountain of his own blood, shed for them.

3. The assembly of the redeemed ascribe the whole of their glory and felicity, forever and ever, to the incarnation. Glorification flows from this, as the sole meritorious cause of it: it is the consequence of the manifestation of God in the human nature: to obtain this, was the great end of his coming in the flesh, and being found in fashion as a man. No soul of the posterity of Adam could ever have seen the glory of God, and the beauties of the celestial paradise, but upon account of it. The mortal life of the Son, is the procuring cause of spiritual, eternal life to his people. A new system of glory is planned, and prepared, for the incarnate Creator, and his glorified creatures. If it be a kingdom, it is a kingdom of glory, more glorious than the kingdoms of nature, or the more glorious kingdom of grace. If it be a palace, it is suitable to the dignity of the glorified company, erected on purpose for the eternal celebration of the deep humiliation of the Son of God, and the consequent exaltation of his redeemed.

If this new system of glory may be represented as a city, the incarnation is the foundation on which it is built; and this is laid on the Rock of Ages, that is, the eternal divinity of the uncreated Self Existence.

Every step Emmanuel took in his incarnate state, and every divine truth he advanced, is here a subject of joy. They are viewed among those salutary, effectual means by which salvation is obtained. A general survey of this, must produce the effects we have just now seen, in the exercise of the highest zeal, and enflamed ardour, in his praise. Every spiritual power is so fully engaged in contemplating a subject of so much excellence and glory, that there is, comparatively, no inclination for any other. There is no labouring here, for the bread which perisheth, for there is no hunger in the heavenly regions; they thirst not, neither are weary.

It is a peculiar felicity to the glorified soul, that it is able to investigate the whole life of its eternal Redeemer: that is, his mortal life, as we have called it, from his happy birth, to his miserable death; and to see the blessed end and design of the whole. While in time it could discover only a very small part of it, and but in a very imperfect manner, now the whole is seen clearly with equal ease and pleasure.

The glorified contemplate, with infinite delight, the whole designs of the only Wise, as they are

recorded in the sacred Scripture; manifested in divine providence; illustrated in the pure life and ministry of the Only Begotten; applied by the operations and influences of the Holy Ghost; and now consummated in the happy regions of eternal glory.

The felicity, which the redeemed of the Lord enjoyed, even in this imperfect state, never arose from themselves, but from the same cause which the glorified comprehend so fully in heaven. It is true their satisfaction, and happiness flowing from hence, was of the same kind and nature, but the degrees were very limited, not worthy to be compared with what they are now. They see clearly, and know distinctly, without the intervention of either cloud or vapour, all the subjects of divine revelation, shining in glorious majesty. It is impossible for mortals to describe the elevation of happiness, which glorified souls enjoy in heaven: but that there are various stations, or degrees, we may naturally suppose. "One star (saith Paul) differeth from another star in glory;" but the least is as full of light as the greatest. It is complete and perfect in its glory. Each vessel of mercy, whether great or small, contains what it can hold. Every one being fully sensible whence his fullness flows, ascribes the whole to the proper cause, which is the manifestation of God in the flesh.

Eternity is the date of their enjoyments: they shall know no end, nor suffer a diminution.

Whatever be the nature of their felicity, or to whatever degree it is elevated, eternal duration is its crowning distinction; no calculations can reach the boundless extent of it. Immortality is eternal life, and the glorified are in full possession of it. No cunning, tempting serpent can gain admission here; this is the paradise of eternal joy, in which grows no tree of interdicted fruit; and the concomitants of this life are glory and honour; the glory of kings in all their splendid royalty; and the honour of princes, with which the eternal Majesty delights to honour them. The hallelujahs of this innumerable, glorified assembly, far surpass every thing which the church on earth could perform. Everlasting love is the ruling passion; it animates every motion and exercise of the soul to God and the Lamb. For there the Lord commandeth his blessing, even life forevermore.

A kingdom which cannot be moved, intimates an eternal sovereignty. A crown of glory that fadeth not away, an eternal weight of glory. The crown of life promised, is now enjoyed, without any dangers from death, or the shadow of it. The very nature of glorification illustrates the eternity of it. It is the gift of God in Christ; and while the Father of eternity is capable of securing his children in being, he cannot be inattentive to the means of their happiness. Hence it is on good ground we are assured, that there shall be no death there; neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall

there be any more pain, because former things are passed away.

The awful prospect of eternity is too powerful for mortal vision. Millions of ages are but a point in endless duration. All numerical supputations, even to the extent of the knowledge of the seraphim, or all the heavenly intelligences, must fall infinitely short in setting forth the ages of eternal existence.

But to illustrate this in a few words, if it be not a presumptuous attempt, let us suppose as many drops of water, as have fallen from the heavens since the world began, or shall descend to the end of time; add to these every drop in the boundless ocean; the innumerable rivers, lakes, or pools of the earth; and all the particles of dew that ever stood on the tops of the innumerable blades of grass, which have covered the whole face of the earth, from the beginning to the end of time; number with these the spires on which they stood; join all the letters, words, pages, and volumes, that ever have been, or shall be presented to the world; let all the sum of this amazing addition be multiplied into itself, and the product of this be again so multiplied, times innumerable, still the ages of eternity infinitely surpass the numeration. When such numbers of ages are run out, as in course they must, eternity then is only beginning. We need not proceed further to extend this dreadful view, it may be

enough here to say, such is the duration of every soul of the human race.

I beg leave still to add a few lines from the ingenious and pious Dr. Gibbon on the subject:

> " Was there a belt that could contain,
> In its vast orb the earth and main;
> With figures was it clustered o'er.
> Without one cypher in the score;
> And could your labouring thoughts assign
> The total of the crowded line;
> Still short the amount, the attempt how vain,
> To reach duration's endless chain.
> Attend, O man, with awe divine,
> For this eternity is thine!

Grace so wonderfully manifested by the incarnation, is consummated in glory; and the eternity of this glory is the crowning felicity. If a period ever could arrive, in which it might be certainly said, all this glory and felicity shall be no more; it would be a hell in the midst of heaven; a damp on the flaming zeal expressed in their songs; and a mighty lessening of their joy.

But the uncreated, eternal Son, who is also our kinsman Redeemer, is the infallible security of their immortal felicity. Whilst he lives, they also must, in the full, uninterrupted possession of the eternal inheritance. Let us then, while we are in this sinful world, and imperfect state, following them who now inherit the promises, adapt the impressive sentiments of the ancient martyrs.

Eternity! Eternity! give us riches that will last to eternity; such as Jesus Christ can give us:

Eternity! Eternity! O were it not for thee,
The saints in bliss and happiness could not happy be;
Eternity! Eternity! O were it not for thee,
One glimpse of hope would mitigate the damned's misery.

We shall finish this part of our work with a few reflections on the stages, or epochas, of the soul's glorification, which may be distinguished into three periods.

1. When it is restored to the spiritual and divine life, by its translation from a state of nature to grace, in regeneration.

2. When it is removed by death into heaven, fully qualified by the agency and operations of the Holy Ghost, for the enjoyment of God and the Lamb, in the inheritance of the saints in light.

3. When it is re-united to the body at the resurrection, and put in full possession of all its privileges, dignity, glory, and happiness: when it shall be justified in the last judgment, and both soul and body shall be for ever with the Lord.

These three periods of the soul's glorification, are distinctly pointed out in the Holy Scripture. In the first, the glory of God comes with the express purpose of glorifying it: the dark benighted creature having the eyes of its understanding enlightened, sees light in his light. It is made comely in his comeliness; enjoys glorious grace;

and aspires to the highest glory. Throughout the whole of this period, which commences on the day of regeneration, and terminates at death, we have seen the blessings of the incarnation exhibited and applied by the infallible agency of the divine eternal Spirit, who calls and invites the needy creature to the enjoyments of glorious grace. He replenishes it with all the gracious, spiritual fruits, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. He increases this glory from degree to degree; he carries it on in the soul, and carries on the soul through all adversaries, difficulties and dangers, through the whole of this trying life, till it be fit for death and heaven.

Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace complete. The smallest degrees of grace are of the same nature as the greatest degrees of glory. The whole proceeds from the same cause, the eternal love of God; bestowed by the same means, the incarnation of his Son; applied for the same end, his eternal praise, and the soul's eternal happiness.

Death is the second period of glorification to the redeemed soul: it no sooner leaves the body than it enters into glory. Death may be considered as the soul's great friend, but the worst enemy of the body. Whilst it introduces the first into endless happiness, it detains the second a prisoner in the earth: and how long this shall be the state of the separated body it is impossible

to say. To the soul, this is a remarkable æra: in regeneration it was born an heir of glory; through death it enters into a full, eternal enjoyment of it.—

> "Why should we start and fear to die;
> What tim'rous beings we mortals are;
> Death is the gate of endless joy,
> And yet we dread to enter there."

The third and last stage of this glory is, when the soul and the body are united again at the resurrection. The whole man shall be glorified with equal certainty that he is redeemed, and therefore the soul and body must meet with the assurance of never being parted more. It is raised a glorious body, suited to the dignity and glory of the soul; and now the whole man, delivered from the bondage of corruption, enters into the complete enjoyment of all his original rights, privileges, dignity, glory, and felicity. All that was intended for him in creation, but which he lost by sin, is now restored. He is fully reinstated, by divine favour, to his forfeited and lost inheritance.

The last judgment will introduce him to eternal glory. The throne of justice is erected not far from the prison of the grave, and all the dead shall come to judgment The redeemed to be justified, and the reprobate to be condemned: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but

the righteous into life eternal. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

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